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Paul Gottfried: *A Sensitized World Order*

Susan Hahn: *Authenticity and Impersonality in Adorno's Aesthetics*

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Introduction

Most catastrophes in the 20th century have been the results of attempts to deploy radical alternatives to what in the 19th century was routinely castigated as "modern bourgeois society." The convenient conclusion often drawn from this state of affairs is to forget about alternatives altogether and try to make the best one can with what there is, which helps explain the resurgence of *de facto* conservatism among both intellectuals and politicians during the last decade. This, however, is a peculiar type of conservatism that often passes itself off as "Left" and "radical," much to the chagrin of old line conservatives, who see their ideological thunder taken away from them through the deployment of new slogans such as "inclusiveness," "civil society," and "human rights." Mired in the contradictory predicament of having to defend classical liberalism against the New Class ideology it has become after it was hijacked by the former Left, these card-carrying conservatives cannot understand how the current version of liberalism is but an outgrowth of the earlier one, which they now try to vindicate by whatever means necessary — to the point of recycling a "new and improved" version of the old New Left ideology, long since relegated by aging baby-boomers to the dustbin of history — the critique of bureaucracy, the indictment of capitalism, the defense of workers' interests, anti-imperialism, etc. The result is collective confusion, where practically all discourse reduces to self-serving New Class projects of social reconstruction seeking to legitimate a *status quo* which, fortunately, seems to have very little use for either modernist or postmodernist apologetics — the output of the two camps in terms of which the intelligentsia now defines itself.

Neither of the two sides succeeds in providing any kind of viable morality, political philosophy, or coherent world-view comparable to what had been institutionalized by the "superstition and myth" of the traditional religions of the so-called "pre-modern" period. As Robert D'Amico shows in his review of a recent debate concerning political philosophy in general and citizenship in particular, neither modernist cosmopolitans nor their pseudo-particularist, postmodern interlocutors have any idea as to the kind of viable and desirable socio-political or axiological framework needed to help resolve the innumerable lingering contradictions of the previously despised bourgeois society. Ultimately, both end up directly or indirectly justifying irresponsibility, nihilism, and opportunism. The cosmopolitans love of abstract universal ideals translates into indifference and irresponsibility whenever confronted with concrete moral and civic quandaries, while postmodern attempts to vindicate particularity and difference readily collapse into incoherence, opportunism, and narcissism.

Contrary to its self-characterization as the paladin of freedom and justice,

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modernist cosmopolitanism turns out to operate much like its former "totalitarian" opponent, seeking to remake the world in its own image, by whatever means necessary. Paul Gottfried's "A Sensitized World Order" traces recent developments in American foreign policy to show the extent to which this cosmopolitan tolerance and benevolence actually amount to an imposition of particular Western values, deemed universal and therefore absolute, on the whole world. The crusades go on, but now under the secular banners of human rights, inclusiveness, and democracy. Applied selectively and often as tools of extraneous political agendas, none of these concepts and the political role they play can pass muster. Thus, as Kaveh Afrasiabi shows in his review of a recent anthology on "deliberative democracy," the fashionable focus on communication actually conceals power relations that often degrade the democratic process to an exercise in mediatization: the manipulation of those who cannot participate in the deliberation into supporting the decisions of those who can. The hidden "democratic" agenda is the reduction of the polity to an aggregation of abstract individuals best suited for New Class social engineering, in a context dominated by a totalizing technostructure deploying normalizing techniques whose effectiveness, as Michel Foucault has convincingly argued, is historically unprecedented.

Postmodernism is at least aware of the deceptive character of modernity. Yet, at best, its critique ends up as what used to be dismissed as abstract negations — the kind of criticism that presupposes and sustains precisely the pathological conditions it bemoans. Thus, in the work of the late Foucault, awareness of the manipulative nature of modernity ends up extending rather than curtailing the logic of totalization. On the pretense of recycling a Greek lifestyle and contraposing ethics to an otherwise foreclosed politics, Foucault's work leads to a self-destructive narcissism lacking any direction or criteria, where "self-transformation" ends up as an excuse for self-indulgence and nihilism. Michael Schwartz' reconstruction of the intellectual trajectory of the late Foucault, documents how the "practices of the self" were meant to reinvigorate "one's capacity to act as an effective political agent." Here, however, political agency has been recast in such a way that it is no longer all that different from consumerism. Lacking a coherent axiological framework by which to define the political, the narcissistic self-absorbed self can "practice" itself to death (as Foucault actually did) and accomplish absolutely nothing, even in terms of self-understanding. The political has to do with collective self-determination predicated on a shared cultural horizon, whose institutionalization defines a group and, *ipso facto*, all its members as political agents. It is unclear how "selfing" around can ever lead beyond the shopping mall, much less to a serious political alternative to modernity.

Today, one of modernity's more fashionable shopping malls is social theory as a substitute for religion, which seeks to provide not only an adequate account of Being, but also to suggest correct ways to deal with it (despite all the old positivist chatter about "value neutrality"). As Aryeh Botwinick argues in his review of one such shopping mall allegedly articulating "no fewer than seven or eight distinct theoretical vantage points," social theory tends to become nothing more

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than the arbitrary speculations of individual sociologists. Seemingly put together according to affirmative action criteria and pandering to the pathologically irrelevant "social research" of the discipline's gerontocracy, the book being reviewed, *What is Social Theory?*, ends up confusing immediacy and common sense, the very beginning of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, with the arrival point — absolute consciousness — in the effort, blatantly advocated in another affirmative action essay, to inform "progressive agendas." If postmodern intoxication reduces all truth to the particular perspectives of various interest groups (feminists, gays, minorities, etc.) why should one even bother to ask the already answered question, "what is social theory?" Obviously, it must be what anyone thinks it is, in which case one wonders why it is thought in public schools as objective knowledge, or why is this teaching of arbitrary opinions financed by taxpayers' money. Maybe it is time for the various contributors to look for a real job.

Within this context of generalized theoretical decadence, relatively new movements, such as the French New Right (having little to do with the traditional Right) stand out as paragons of sanity. In an elaborate reconstruction of this movement's philosophy, Michael Torigian outlines its motivating themes and their political implications. Unfortunately, the project is predicated on a hyper-simplistic vision of the US as the kind of superficial and decadent society Hollywood depicts, which makes one wonder how could it possibly have achieved world hegemony and become a model for the whole world. This success is actually explainable by the fact that, contrary to Hollywood and the European mass media, the US is still rooted in many of the communitarian and federalist traditions of the American Revolution, has been able to resist Jacobinism much better than the rest of Europe, and remains a much more open society than most of the rest of the world.

A similar misunderstanding taints the French New Right's critique of Christianity as a tradition foreign to "true" European pagan culture, tendentially totalitarian, and the foundation of its secularized otherness (the Enlightenment and modernity). One has to wonder how long it takes for a tradition to take root and cease to be branded as a foreign import. If two thousand years is not enough, then why not go back even further, *before* Indo-Europeans allegedly invaded Europe, and vindicate whatever was there at that time? Worse yet, today it is impossible to trot out paganism as an alternative to Christianity. During the past two millennia Christianity has managed to integrate every feature of paganism that made any sense — including its localism and particularism (in the form of Saints and cults), and its various rituals (such as the Christmas celebration). Totalitarian in its universalism, Christianity nonetheless developed as what Schmitt called a *complexio oppositorum*, both in its Catholic system of parishes and in the even more autonomous and localist Protestant congregations, which were the model for the original American federalism, before it became corrupted following the Civil War. Despite the French New Right's interesting flourishes, it makes absolutely no sense to talk about any kind of European heritage independent of Christianity. But, even if it did make sense and the Indo-European pagan heritage were

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to be taken seriously as the European cultural backbone, what does it really amount to? The so-called tri-partite ideology turns out to be a trivial division of labor, probably found everywhere in pre-modern, non-European cultures, while the argument from linguistics remains totally inconsequential. The recycling of Nietzsche and Heidegger is interesting, but neither original not entirely free of biologistic encrustations, whereby ethnicity is occasionally portrayed as penetrating the genes, triggering well-known (and, in this case, probably justified) liberal reactions — which taint the whole movement and have made it practically impossible to shake what Benoist calls the *reductio ad Hitlerium*. Despite all this, the French New Right retains a level of seriousness and profundity which warrants engaging it, however much one may disagree with many of its tenets.

Surprisingly enough, and in a direct refutation of its imputed rightist association, the French New Right reserves its most violent criticisms for that old Left foe, capitalism. Far from analyzing it along instrumentalist lines, and thus readding it as wreaking havoc only within particular social contexts already devastated by cultural crises (even if often precipitated by imperialist violence), the French New Right has bought the Left's demonic view of the ontological primacy of economic relations. Like the Left, of course, it has no clue as to what to substitute for it, which will not simultaneously empower a New Class of political administrators with totalitarian tendencies and unable to run the economy anywhere as efficiently as the market. Similar sentiments fuel Wolfgang Palaver's analysis of the economy as a theological problem. In a detailed reconstruction of how the dialectic of competition, the motor of capitalism, was articulated by Hesiod, Aeschylus, Aristotle, Smith and others, Palaver dissects it as a struggle between a "good" emulation and a "bad" envy, and poses the question in terms of salvaging the first and elimination the second. His closing proposal of the Eucharist as a model for a new economy, however, is far too vague and not thus very convincing, despite its "glocalist" character, seemingly embracing both federalism and communitarianism. Capitalism does not reduce to competition, and the problem with globalization is not primarily "envy." The problem with globalization has to do with its disintegrating impact on cultures and societies as a result of economic integration in the world market, and competition as a destructive feature of capitalism has now been politically under control for quite a while.

Capitalism as a mechanism of exchange and interaction cannot be a theological problem. It is a mere mechanism. The theological problem comes in only with how capitalism is used as a placebo for salvation, immortality, and self-fulfillment. As Susan Hahn argues in her discussion of Adorno's aesthetics, what is at stake is not so much a chimerical final reconciliation, but the ability to deal with a world full of contradictions — first and foremost those brought about by the *results* of capitalist relations — without occluding or legitimating them.

Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

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The Philosophical Foundations of the French New Right

Michael Torigian

"The future belongs to those with the longest memory."
— Friedrich Nietzsche

The Third Way

To understand the French New Right, it is necessary to begin with its identitarian philosophy of history. This philosophy, however, is so entangled in an ideological thicket of critical scorn that it is all but impossible to approach with impartiality. Like revolutionary conservatism, national bolshevism, and various expressions of populism and syndicalism, the French New Right seeks a revolutionary course beyond the Left-Right politics it rejects; and, like these other "Third Way" tendencies, it, too, is routinely compared with the most notorious of the Third Way movements: fascism and National Socialism.[1] While liberalism, social democracy, and communism, as different expressions of the Left, are not similarly equated (and tainted), there is a certain, if tenuous logic to these comparisons in that all Third Way tendencies oppose the modernist order.

1. Zeev Sternhell is typical of those who characterize the rejection of the Left-Right continuum as inherently fascist. See *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, tr. by D. Maisel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For a *Grécistes'* critique, see Gilbert Destrées, *Les non-conformistes des années 30: entre doctrine et action* (Paris: GRECE Pamphlet, n.d.). For an alternate account, see Marc Crapez, *Naissance de la gauche* (Paris: Michalon, 1998). Of the numerous works on the different Third Way tendencies, the most impressive is Armin Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland, 1918-1932*, 5th ed. (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 1999). On the Third Way *per se*, see Arnaud Imatz, *Par delà droite et gauche. Permanence et évolution des idéaux et des valeurs non-conformistes* (Paris: Godefroy de Bouillon, 1996).

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Less certain still is the inquisitional intent of these comparisons.[2] Efforts by Alain de Benoist's GRECE (*Groupement de Recherche et d'Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne*),[3] the principal French proponent of the Third Way, to challenge the liberal paradigm or to evoke the Indo-European heritage as a spur to cultural renewal, have led to numerous McCarthy-style allegations of Nazism and "Aryan supremacy"[4] — even though

2. David Barney *et al.*, *La Nouvelle inquisition. Ses acteurs, ses méthodes, ses victimes: Essai sur le terrorisme intellectuel et la police de la pensée* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1993); also *De la police de la pensée à la nouvelle inquisition: Actes du XXXLe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: GRECE, 1998). On the censorious nature of the contemporary intelligentsia, see Régis Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*, tr. by D. Macey (London: Verso, 1981); Jean Sévillia, *Le terrorisme intellectuel de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: L'Æncre, 2000); Klaus J. Groth, *Die Diktatur der Guten: Political Correctness* (Munich: Herbig, 1999).

3. When discovered by the French media in the late 1970s, the GRECE was labelled "*Nouvelle Droite*." This term not only lacks substance, it is used in the most contradictory ways. See Jean-Christian Petitfils, *L'extrême droite en France* (Paris: PUF, 1983), p. 119. While it may be inaccurate to translate *"Nouvelle Droite"* as "New Right," since this term is usually reserved for the union-busting, budget-cutting Anglo-American Right of the 1970s and 1980s, as represented by the governments of Thatcher and Reagan, and the theories of Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, there is no better term. Programmatically, this New Right was a neo-liberal tendency that sought to diminish state intervention in the economy, to dismantle the Keynesian system, and to mobilize popular electoral support around populist and Christian-fundamentalist themes. By contrast, the *Nouvelle Droite* (i.e., the GRECE) is anti-liberal and anti-Christian, hostile to the Anglo-American Right, and more concerned with culture than economics. Typical of the prevailing inability to make these distinctions is Ruth Levitas, ed., *The Ideology of the New Right* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986). For a *Grécistes'* critique of the New Right, see Alain de Benoist, "Hayek: A Critique," in *Telos* 110 (Winter 1998), pp. 71-104; Alain de Benoist, "Le libéralisme contre les identités," in *Aux sources de l'erreur libérale*, ed. by B. Guillemaind and A. Guyot-Jeannin (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1999); Guillaume Faye, "Le libéralisme, ça ne marche pas," in *éléments pour la civilisation européenne* (hereafter *éléments*) 44 (January 1983). On the GRECE's project, see Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, "The French New Right in the Year 2000," in *Telos* 115 (Spring 1999), pp. 117-144. See also Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990); and *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), devoted to "The French New Right: New Right — New Left — New Paradigm?"

4. Unlike their liberal critics, *Lepénistes* and Catholic traditionalists accuse the *Grécistes* of pro-communism and crypto-*gauchisme*. From a different angle, the anti-Establishment Left also rejects the prevailing characterizations. Some members of the French Communist Party and the Left/nationalist wing of the Socialist Party (most notably, Régis Debray and Jean-Pierre Chevènement), along with independent leftists associated with *Esprit*, Jean-Edern Hallier's *L'Idiot international*, the *Mouvement anti-utilitariste dans les sciences sociales (MAUSS)* of Serge Latouche and Alain Caillé, and parts of the Italian far Left dismiss the accusation of fascism and have, at times, collaborated with the GRECE. Certain prominent Franco-Jewish intellectuals, such as the late Raymond Aron and Annie Kriegel, while unsympathetic to the GRECE's project, have similarly repudiated the accusation of "fascism."

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for thirty years Benoist and his *Grécistes* have denounced Nazism as a "brown Jacobinism" and have characterized racism as an offshoot of the totalizing modernity they oppose. The greatest obstacle to understanding the Third Way may stem, however, from the fact that these comparisons mistakenly assume that ideology, an "outgrowth of modernity" that reduces the world to itself, and philosophy, which is an opening to the world, are analogous, and that, therefore, the philosophical disposition of a school of thought, such as the GRECE's, can be deduced from its politics.[5] Since all these stigmatizing comparisons endeavor to delegitimate, rather than to explain such non-conformist tendencies, it is hardly surprising that they also have succeeded in marginalizing them.[6]

Europe's Identitarian Crisis

An interest in the past generally begins with an interest in the future. As its appellation suggests, the GRECE's interest is European civilization. Unlike globalists and Altanticists, who tout its wealth and economic prominence, *Grécistes* believe Europe is in decline.[7] The continent, they argue, is no longer governed by European criteria. Self-serving technocracies, guided by liberal managerial imperatives, now rule its lands with a generic conception of man that disparages its particularistic cultures and historic continuities.[8] The ensuing weakening of collective identities has been compounded by a stunted system of socialization, educational policies that denigrate traditional standards, a proliferation of social pathologies and cretinizing spectacles, and a vast influx of inassimilable Afro-Asian immigrants.[9] Buttressed by the liberal "Right" and the Social Democratic Left, as they converge in extolling the

5. Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, tr. by P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), § 14.

6. On several occasions, Pierre-André Taguieff has denounced the "extraordinary abasement" of the reigning intelligentsia and the "terrorist" vigilante tactics it employs to stifle debate. See, e.g., *Sur la Nouvelle Droite* (Paris: Descartes et Cie, 1994), pp. 314-36. The situation is not qualitatively different in the US. In assessing the recent literature on the Right, Glen Jeansonne has warned that: "We are rapidly approaching the point at which scholarship becomes propaganda, ceases to liberate the spirit of the individual, and simply replaces old dogmas with new ones [i.e., with those of the present Left-liberal Establishment]." See *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and WW II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 186.

7. Julien Freund, *La Décadence* (Paris: Sirey, 1984). Cf. Robert M. Adams, *Decadent Societies* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), p. 36.

8. Guillaume Faye, *Le système à tuer les peuples* (Paris: Copernic, 1981), p. 144.

9. Alain de Benoist, "L'Europe sous tutelle," in *éléments* 59 (Summer 1986); Philippe Malaud, *La révolution libérale* (Paris: Masson, 1976).

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virtues of the world market, these technocracies focus almost exclusively on "the battle for exports" and the dictates of globalization, seemingly indifferent to the breakdown of social-cultural solidarities.[10] Even more deleterious than these technocratic threats to European identity has been the loss of sovereignty that followed in the wake of the "Thirty Years' War" (1914-1945), when Europe was occupied and divided by the two extra-European powers. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War allegedly altered only the character of this heteronomy. Though accepting Heidegger's contention that the techno-economic civilizations of communist Russia and liberal America were "metaphysically the same," with similar materialist philosophies of history, *Grécistes* believe the American occupation was the more pernicious: where the Soviets crushed any assertion of East European independence, the US not only occupied Western Europe militarily in the name of defending it, but colonized it culturally in ways that decomposed and Americanized European life.[11] "A people," Raymond Ruyer has written, "more often perishes by losing its soul than its resources."[12]

To *Grécistes*, this seems to be the case today. In their view, the US represents the purest embodiment of liberal modernity, and thus the chief worldwide force for cultural homogenization. Nowhere, they argue, were

10. Alain de Benoist, "Idéologies: c'est la lutte finale" (1984), in *La Ligne de mire. Discours aux citoyens européens 1972-1987* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1995); Pierre Joannon, "Pavane pour une Europe défunte," in *éléments* 19 (December 1976); Alain de Benoist, "Die Religion der Menschenrechte," in *Mut zur Identität*, ed. by Pierre Krebs (Struckum: Verlag für Ganzheitl. Forschung und Kultur, 1988). See also Pierre Thuillier, *La grande implosion: Rapport sur l'effrondrement de l'Occident 1999-2002* (Paris: Fayard, 1995); Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996).

11. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* tr. by R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 37; Alain de Benoist, *Orientations pour les années décisives* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1982), pp. 29-31, and "L'ennemi principal," in *éléments* 41 (March-April 1982); Guillaume Faye, "Pour en finir avec la civilisation occidentale," in *éléments* 34 (April 1980); Marco Tarchi, "La colonisation subtile: 'American way of life' et dynamique sociale," in *Le défi de Disneyland: Actes du XXe colloque national de la revue "éléments"* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1987); Jordis von Lohausen, "Main basse sur l'Europe," in *éléments* 84 (February 1996). Cf. Julius Evola, "Americanisme et Bolchevisme" (1929), in *Le visionnaire foudroye,* ed. by Jean Mabire (Paris: Copernic, 1977); Gerd Lundestad, *"Empire" by Integration: The United States and European Integration, 1945-1997* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Jacques Thibau, *La France colonisée* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980).

12. Raymond Ruyer, *Les cent prochains siècles: Le destin historique de l'homme selon la Nouvelle Gnose américaine* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), p. 320; Alain de Benoist, "Vers l'indépendence! Pour une Europe souveraine et libérée des blocs!," in *La ligne de mire, op. cit.*; Guillaume Faye, *Nouveau discours à la nation européenne* (Paris: Albatros, 1985).

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the modernist principles born in the 18th-century Enlightenment — the principles of equality, rationality, universalism, individuality, economism, and developmentalism — as thoroughly realized as in the new republic "liberated from the dead hand of the European past."[13] In this spirit, the US was founded on a concept of its citizenry as autonomous self-interested subjects, *homo œconomicus*, oriented to market exchanges and contractual relations, but devoid of high culture or ethnic identification. As such, the denizens of this modernist "enterprise" (constituting a *demos,* rather than an *ethnos*) have tended to substitute mercantile conventions for tradition, to define themselves in terms of a materialist way of life, and to elevate "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," i.e., the monadic conception of freedom, to the pinnacle of their concerns. Any notion of a "people" or of particularistic cultural organisms imbued with historically-shaped destinies, has been entirely foreign to their "national" project.[14] For this reason, the "culturally-primitive upper class" (Oswald Spengler) of this former colony, in its role as modernity's elect, has been occupied almost exclusively with promoting consumer choice in open markets and enhancing the "rationality" of these choices by disembedding individuals from their communities and ascriptive ties. US power was accordingly imposed on Europe as if the entire continent, not just the US, were frozen in an eternal here and now, concerned solely with matters of economic advantage. Aided by marketing and media lures that circumvented elite structures and catered to the libidinous impulses of mass taste, Europe's

13. Although *Grécistes* acknowledge the European roots of modernity, they claim European modernity lacked the truly universal impulse which Americans (former colonials shallowly rooted in the Western tradition and without a homogeneous cultural heritage) have imparted to it — somewhat in the same way socialism was European in origin, but not in the totalizing/universalizing manner of the Soviets. See Guillaume Faye, *Les nouveaux enjeux idéologiques* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1985), p. 56. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, *America,* tr. by C. Turner (London: Verso, 1988), p. 73; Eric Werner, *L'avant-guerre civile* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1998), pp. 27-29.

14. Alain de Benoist points out that the English word "people" is not the equivalent of the French *"peuple"* or the German *"Volk,"* but closer in meaning to *"gens"* or *"Leute"* — i.e., terms denoting an indeterminate plurality of not necessarily related individuals. There is, moreover, no English equivalent for *"patrie,"* and "home" for the American is where "he hangs his hat." See *Démocratie: Le problème* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1985), pp. 30 and 40; and Robert de Herte (Alain de Benoist) and Hans-Jürgen Nigra (Giorgio Locchi), "Il était une fois l'Amérique," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 27-28 (January 1976). See also Herman Keyserling, *America Set Free* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1929), and Robert Aron and Arnaud Dandieu, *Le cancer américain* (Paris: Rieder, 1931), two works informing much of the GRECE's anti-Americanism. Cf. Jacob Burkhardt, *Reflections on History*, tr. by M. D. Hottinger (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1979), p. 39; "Stendhal et les Etats-Unis d'Amérique," in *Etudes et recherches* 4-5 (January 1977); J. G. Jatras, "Rainbow Fascism at Home and Abroad," in *Chronicles* (June 1998).

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postwar Americanization displaced, if not discredited much of the continent's millennial heritage. *Grécistes* thus look on America as a "murderer" of culture and history, a civilizational no-man's-land bent on turning the world into a single global market where everything is exchangeable.[15] As Benoist writes, the US "is not like other countries. It is a country that seeks to destroy all others."[16] This *Gréciste* view of the New World as a cultural threat to the Old World's survival is especially relevant, since many Europeans have succumbed to America's hegemonic designs and have abandoned not a few of their defining particularisms. As John Gray writes,[17] Europe today "confronts the phenomenon of a culture permeated throughout by a hatred of its own identity."

15. "The vocation of the human race, they [Americans] believe, is American." See Thomas Molnar, *The Emerging Atlantic Culture* (New York: Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 22. In this vein, Robert Kennedy spoke of America's "right to the spiritual direction of the planet;" George Bush, in announcing the New World Order, proclaimed the inexorability of America's global leadership; and William J. Clinton, as the latest exemplar of his nation's moral superiority, designated America as the world's "indispensable nation." See Claude Julien, *America's Empire,* tr. by R. Bruce (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), p. 31; Pierre-Marie Gallois, *Le soleil d'Allah aveugle l'Occident* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1995), p. 25; and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 195. See also Jean Cau, "Le triomphe de Mickey," in *Etats-Unis: Danger — Actes du XXVe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: GRECE, 1992); Henri Gobard, *La guerre culturelle: logique du désastre* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), pp. 62-92. As to America's newfound mania for multiculturalism, it has less to do with cultural sensitivity than with globalist and managerial imperatives, hostile to all forms of indigenous culture. See Paul Edward Gottfried, *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 103. Not unrelatedly, the GRECE's anti-Americanism is accompanied by a similar coolness to the English. The only Anglophones contributing to its cultural arsenal have been the Irish, whose "lovers and dancers" long incurred the wrath of what W. B. Yeats called "Cromwell's murderous crew" — i.e., the Puritan-mercantile forces of the Anglo-American world.

16. Benoist, "Vers l'indépendence," *op. cit.* See also Alain de Benoist, *Europe, Tiers monde, même combat* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1980); Pierre Bérard, "Ces cultures qu'on assassine," in *La cause des peuples: Actes du XVe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1982). To the degree that they resemble Russian, Indian, and Chinese critics of America's universalist pretensions, *Grécistes* are a good example of what Samuel P. Huntington refers to as "the main enemy" in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

17. Quoted in *The Nature of the Right: American and European Politics and Political Thought since 1789*, ed. by Roger Eatwell and Noël Sullivan (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), p.181. See also Jean Cau, *Discours de la décadence* (Paris: Copernic, 1978), pp. 176 and 188; Alain de Benoist, "Qu'est-ce que l'identité? Réflexions sur un concept-clef," in *éléments* 77 (n.d. [Spring 1993?]); Pierre Krebs, *Das Thule-Seminar: Geistesgegenwart der Zukunft* (Horn: Burkhart Weecke Verlag, 1994), pp. 23-24. Cf. Richard Bessel, "European Society in the Twentieth Century," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe*, ed. by T. C. W. Blanning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 252-54.

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The Longest Memory

To strip a people of their culture and history, as America's universalist and homogenizing project entails, is tantamount, *Grécistes* argue, to severing a people's roots, and a people can no more live with severed roots than can a tree. Without a memory of its collective past and the foundational myths that define and distinguish it from others — without, that is, the encompassing forces that tie a multiple of related individuals to a larger identity — a people ceases to be a people.[18] For this reason, *Grécistes* consider the erosion of Europe's cultural foundations to be the greatest danger facing its civilization. Consequently, the cultural front has become the primary theater of their operations.[19] In defending Europe's patrimony, their line of march has commenced with a metapolitical assault on the cosmopolitan forces of modernity. Like Antonio Gramsci, they believe that power

18. Jean Varenne, "L'héritage indo-européen," in *éléments* 40 (Winter 1982); Benoist, *Orientations pour les années décisives, op. cit.*, pp. 52-53; Pierre Krebs, *Im Kampf um das Wesen* (Horn: Burkhart Weecke Verlag, 1997), pp. 16-20; Faye, *Le système à tuer les peuples, op. cit*, pp. 164-77; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, tr. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 63. Cf. Hellmut Diwald, *Mut zur Geschichte* (Bergisch Gladbach: Lübbe Verlag, 1983), p. 8.

19. By its very nature, culture aspires toward self-sufficient unity in its representational modes. Because its "centripetalism" tolerates only limited amounts of the foreign, culture is inherently "exclusive." This makes its members part of a living whole, distinct from others. See Alain de Benoist, "Culture," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 25-26 (Winter 1974-75); Richard M. Weaver, *Visions of Order: The Cultural Crisis of Our Time* (Bryn Mawr: Intercollegiate Studies, 1995), pp. 3-21; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le regard eloigné* (Paris: Plon, 1983), pp. 24-30. Given culture's inherent exclusiveness, the GRECE's critics consider its "culturalism" to be a sophisticated form of traditional racism (in that it allegedly replaces notions of biological inferiority with those of cultural difference), little concerned that culturalism and racism partake of radically different realms. For a typical example of this confusion, see Alain Bihr, *L'Actualité d'un archaïsme: La pensée d'extrême droite et la crise de la modernité* (Paris: Page Deux, 1998), pp. 15-40; see also Pierre-André Taguieff, "Le néo-racisme différentialiste. Sur l'ambiguité d'une evidence commune et ses effets pervers," in *Langage et Société* 34 (December 1985). These critics also dismiss the GRECE's advocacy of *le droit à la différence* and *la cause des peuples*. See Alain de Benoist, "Le droit à la différence," and Gilbert Destrées, "Différentialisme contre racisme," in *éléments* 77, *op. cit.* Ironically, the GRECE's culturalism is profoundly egalitarian and, thus modernist, stemming from the Enlightenment's programmatic affirmation of the equality of all peoples and cultures — an affirmation which *Grécistes* philosophically oppose, but tend to accept in cultural practice. Relatedly, Paul Piccone links the GRECE's critique of Left-liberal "anti-racism" to the critique of anti-Semitism made by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. by John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1972 [1944]). By today's hyper-liberal standards, Horkheimer's and Adorno's defense of Jewish identity, like the culturalism of the French New Right, would be considered "racist," because it opposes a homogenizing universalism threatening particularisms with extermination. See Paul Piccone, "Confronting the French New Right," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993-Spring 1994), pp. 3-24.

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and politics follow culture, and that Europe continues to betray itself as long as its culture remains infused with anti-European influences. To combat the hegemony of American-style modernity and to instill in their people a will to be themselves, they have taken up a Gramscian metapolitics that treats culture as if it were a strategic high-ground to be contested by "organic intellectuals" bearing different views of what it means to be European.[20] In this spirit, they struggle for a re-Europeanization of the continent.

Unlike conservative and traditionalist critics of liberal modernity, *Grécistes*' metapolitics attacks what many consider the core religious component of European identity.[21] From their perspective, the Christian religious heritage constitutes not simply the spiritual foundation of modernity, but an ideology inimical to all forms of indigenous culture.[22] They point out that Christianity arose in a multicultural world filled with

20. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and tr. by Q. Hoare and G. N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 3-13; *Pour un 'Gramscisme de droite': Actes du XVIe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1982); Pierre Vial, "Die weltbewegende Kraft der Ideen," in *Elemente für de europäische Wiedergeburt* 2 (January 1987).

21. For the relationship between conservatism, traditionalism, and Christianity, see Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, ed., *Antichristliche Konservative: Religionkritik von rechts* (Munich: Herderbücherei, 1982).

22. Alain de Benoist, "La religion de l'Europe," in *éléments* 36 (Fall 1980); Louis Rougier, *Celse contre les chrétiens*, with an introduction by Alain de Benoist (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1997). Cf. Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, *A History of Pagan Europe* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999), pp. 59-77. For a critique of the GRECE's anti-Christianism, see Daniel Cologne, *Nouvelle droite et subversion* (Paris: Collection Métapolitique et Tradition, 1979); Georges Hourdin, *La nouvelle droite et les chrétiens* (Paris: Eds. du Cerf, 1980). *Grécistes* acknowledge Christianity's syncretistic character: it absorbed many traditional pagan elements and ultimately adapted itself to the Indo-European worldview. Yet, they claim it never fully conquered Europe, and that the greatest European achievements, whether in the form of the Gothic Cathedrals or in the music of Bach, were essentially pagan in inspiration. See Patrick de Plunkett, "Analyses," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 27-28 (January 1976); Pierluigi Locchi, "La musique, le mythe, Wagner et moi," in *Etudes et recherches* 3 (June 1976). Despite their recognition of its syncretistic character, the GRECE's anti-Christianism (or, more accurately, its anti-Catholicism) emphasizes Christianity's Hebraic, rather than European roots, and underplays the powerful Europeanizing influences exerted by traditional Catholicism, which, unlike its post-Vatican II counterpart or its Protestant offshoots, bore little resemblance to the oriental forms of early Christianity. Cf. James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Given the GRECE's implicit Islamophilism, its strident anti-Catholicism seems curiously inconsistent, if not duplicitous, especially considering Islam's more faithful distillation of Near Eastern monotheism. See "Dossier: Les Arabes," in *éléments* 53 (Spring 1985); Alexander del Valle, *Islamisme et les Etats-Unis: Une alliance contre l'Europe*, 2nd ed. (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1999), p. 53; and Guillaume Faye, *La colonisation de l'Europe: Discours vrai sur l'immigration et l'Islam* (Paris: L'Æncre, 2000), pp. 73-85 and 329-36.

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anomie and deracination, that it was multi-ethnic in conviction, and that it rejected all communal particularisms, deigning only to be "in the world, not of it."[23] Beginning with their affiliation to the early Greco-Roman church, Christians identified with a people and a history (those of the Bible) that were not their own, abandoning, in effect, their native identity. In this spirit, the church's "new covenant" was made between God and all humanity, which gave it a universal, rather than a national mission. Accordingly, history, culture, and ethnicity, from which the complexities of earthly identity are fashioned, have been irrelevant to its adherents, who see themselves as God's children, indifferent to the ascriptions obscuring the equality of every soul and obstructing the spread of His word. As Louis Pauwels puts it, Christians have no *patrie,* only God's promise land.[24] Relatedly, in focusing on the hereafter, their salvational calculous neglects the holistic communal relations that animated pagan religiosity and nurtures a social ideal radically opposed to the classical idea of tradition, hierarchy, and hearth.[25] By privileging individual salvation and deprecating attachment to everything unrelated to redemption, Christianity prepared the way for egoistic and, ultimately, anti-identitarian social forms.[26]

Even more consequential in *Grécistes*' eyes is Christianity's dualistic cosmology. Unlike pagans, Christians see the natural world not as the body of the gods, infused with the sacred, but as a creation called forth out of nothing by a transcendent Creator who stands outside and above it. By sharply differentiating between creation and Creator —

23. Alain de Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit* (Paris: Hallier, 1979), pp. 167-84. Cf. Burton L. Mack, *Who Wrote the New Testament? The Making of the Christian Myth* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995), pp. 19-31; Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, tr. by W. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), vol. 2, p. 413.

24. Louis Pauwels, *Comment devient-on ce que l'on est?* (Paris: Stock, 1978), p. 145. Cf. Richard Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), pp. 30-31; Egon Haffner, *Der "Humanitarismus" und die Versuch seiner Überwindung bei Nietzsche, Scheler und Gehlen* (Würzburg: Konigshausen und Neumann, 1988), p. 75.

25. Guillaume Faye, "La problématique moderne de la raison ou la querelle de la rationalité," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 41 (November 1984); Louis Rougier, *Du paradis à l'utopie* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), p. 60. Cf. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950).

26. Louis Dumont, "La genèse chrétienne de l'individualisme moderne," in *Le Débat* 15 (September 1981); Pierre Bérard, "Louis Dumont: Anthropologie et modernité," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 39 (Fall 1982). Also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, tr. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), §9; Marcel Gauchet, *Le désenchantement du monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. 77.

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making the latter the source, not the result, of the former, as pagans held — they posit the primacy of the God who created, rules, and eventually will preside over the end of the world. Subordinated to this Supreme Being, man's world becomes comprehensible solely in terms of His *logos:* i.e., in terms of the divine rationality ordering creation. Accordingly, all world events and all human actions, despite their apparent incoherence and antagonism, partake in the *logos*' universality. This belief in the *raison du monde* makes Christianity, like Judaism, an ultra-rationalist religion, with "all aspects of man's life [subject to] a myriad of prescriptions, laws, and interdictions."[27] Moreover, by replacing the sacred, mythic elements of pre-Christian Europe with the *logos*' higher rationality, and by conceiving of divinity in otherworldly terms, the cosmos is desacralized, nature objectified, and creation devalued.[28] Apart, then, from God, the Christian world is drained of significance; what Max Weber refers to as "disenchantment" is, for *Grécistes*, an innovation not of modern rationalism, but of a cosmology that separates an all-perfect Creator from a creation that imperfectly reflects Him.[29]

From Christian dualism, an entirely new view of time emerges. Because man (in the form of "Adam and Eve") tainted creation by disobeying God, Christians look on history as a tale of his fallen state.[30] Their "logocentric" intent is hence directed beyond the "vale of tears" to the end of time, when man, or at least the saved among men, are to be returned to His grace.[31] "Instead of being [a] religion of *life,* here and now," Christianity, as one of the great modern pagans characterizes it, becomes a "religion of postponed destiny, death and reward *afterwards,* 'if you are good'."[32] This finalist (or eschatological) vision of history, whose culmination is to be the Last Judgement, Genesis' antipode, gives

27. Sunic, *Against Equality and Democracy, op. cit.,* p. 74.

28. Thomas Molnar and Alain de Benoist, *L'éclipse du sacré: discours et réponses* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1986), pp. 131-47; Sigrid Hunke, "Was Trägt über den Untergang des Zeitalters?," in *Elemente für die europäische Wiedergeburt* 1 (July 1986).

29. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 51-52; Alain de Benoist, *L'empire intérieur* (Paris: Fata Morgana, 1995), pp. 32-38; Guillaume Faye, "Heidegger et la question du dépassement du Christianisme," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 39 (Fall 1982).

30. Sigrid Henke, *Europas andere Religion: Die Überwindung der religiösen Krise* (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1969), pp. 27-39.

31. Benoist, *L'empire intérieur, op. cit.,* p. 31.

32. D. H. Lawrence, *Apocalypse* (New York: Viking, 1931), p. 59. (Emphasis in the original, as in all subsequent uses of it).

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rise to Christianity's unilinear conception of time, in which the present issues from a former determination and the future follows the "path of time" to something better. Within the frame of this irreversible progression — running from the fall to salvation, from the particular to the redeeming universal — time ceases to function as a recurring cycle of nature and becomes a vector whose continuous temporality ascends from creation (occurring but once), to Moses, to Jesus, to the Resurrection, and, finally, to the world's end. History is thereby homogenized into a sequence of successive now-points, with events seen as different stages in salvation's progression along this ascent, each stage representing a present ("the now") distinct from a past ("the no-longer now") and a future ("the not-yet-now").[33] With the advent of Christianity, then, the nature of historical enquiry undergoes a radical change, as the mythic adjunct of a specific cultural tradition (history) is transformed into the study of a creation that irreversibly progresses as an essentialist-defined being traverses a fixed course of becoming.[34]

Because it posits a rational necessity underlying history's "progression," *Grécistes* believe the Christian concept of history has the cultural-ontological effect of denigrating the past and locking man into an abstract temporal continuum whose single possible outcome corrupts "the innocence of becoming" (Nietzsche). Modernity, they add, gives this concept a no less determinist cast, for Christianity's secular progenies, liberalism and Marxism, have allegedly embraced a similar "*telos* of redemption" — framed in materialist, rather than spiritual terms, with the GNP replacing Jesus as the chief idol, happiness as salvation, and reason as faith, but, nonetheless, understood as the progressive development of a purposeful

33. Alain de Benoist, "Sacré païen et désacralisation judéo-chrétienne du Monde," in *Quelle religion pour l'Europe*, ed. by Démètre Théraios (Paris: Georg, 1990). In Catholicism, especially among its former peasant adherents, this progressive sense was mitigated by "liturgical time," whose sacred calendar annually repeated the historical time of Jesus. Liturgical time has, though, like other pagan encrustations, largely been demoted in the modern church. See Alain de Benoist, "Le nouvel calendrier liturgique," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 12 (March-April 1970).

34. Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, tr. by W. Trask (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 134-35. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, tr. by F. V. Filson (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). The teleological is by no means foreign to the Ancients; it is, for example, central to Aristotle's thought. But Aristotle, like Plato and Socrates before him, anticipated the Christian/modernist metaphysics opposed by *Grécistes* — Christianity being, in Nietzsche's phrase, a "Platonism of the masses." The Indo-European world-view that is lost and lamented here, to use Greek examples, refers to the age of Homer, the pre-Socratics, and the tragedians.

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teleology that supersedes the past's errant legacy.[35] In other words, modernists, refuse Christian appeals to transcendent values only to re-establish them in immanent ones.[36] They might have emptied the heavens of the gods, but their rationalist notion of history is still simply another expression of a supra-historical process governed not by life, but by a metaphysics that seeks light and vision from what lies ahead — in this case, "the global triumph of economic rationality."[37] Moreover, in the form of the now discredited, though still implicitly dominant Whig and Marxist interpretations, modernist historiography not only gives new impetus to the teleological impulse of the linear view by dismissing the "no longer present" and by privileging the Great Narrative whose *telos* is the universal and timeless, it deprecates all particularisms, concerned as it is with the single evolutionary goal to which progress or class struggle (the secularized equivalents of the divine *logos)* is heading and the universal solution this *logos* messianically offers for all social, moral, and political problems. The developmental impulse of this historiography assumes, as a consequence, a directional, uniform, and causal form that optimistically anticipates a more rational and perfect future.[38]

Against the Christian/modernist concept of history, which "dialectically" negates an erring past in the name of an expiated future, *Grécistes* adopt the perspective of the *longue durée,* evoking from the continent's primordial origins its longest memory, which "rises up in us whenever we become 'serious'."[39] In privileging the immemorial of Europe's past, this millennial perspective presupposes a tradition of community whose

35. Rougier, *Du paradis à l'utopie*, *op. cit.*, p. 125; Pierre Chassard, *La philosophie de l'histoire dans la philosophie de Nietzsche* (Paris: GRECE, 1975), pp. 26-40. See also Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, tr. by G. Schwab (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 36-52; Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. by P. Emard and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), §10a and §13b.

36. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §7.

37. "The social revolution. . . cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future." Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), in *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 400. Like those adhering to the biblical, liberal, and Freudian traditions, Marxists conceive of origins in purely negative terms: the "long detour" that began with the abandonment of "primitive communism" (analogous to the expulsion from Eden/the natural state/the patricidal act); hence, the Marxist effort to "escape history."

38. Alain de Benoist, "Une brève histoire de l'idée de progrès," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 51 (2000).

39. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, tr. by W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), Essay I, §3.

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organic, cultural, and mythic references reach back into the far recesses of time and encompass all the European peoples.[40] From this heritage, *Grécistes* hope to differentiate between what is properly European and what has been imposed as a foreign, self-denying admixture. The question immediately arises, though, as to how cogent it is to think of Europe as comprising such a community. Scholarly convention long held that the ancient Near East prepared the seed bed of European culture, and that Europe's very existence stemmed not from itself, but from another civilization. *Grécistes*, however, dismiss this *ex oriente lux* thesis, claiming it reflects the deracinating impulse of Christian/modernist universalism and a hostility toward native culture.[41] Therefore, they reject the prevailing accounts that situate Europe's roots in the Euphrates River valley — "We come from the people of The *Iliad* and the *Edda*, not the *Bible*" — and argue instead for the integrity of European origins.[42] In this, their historiographical apostasy, they have been especially fortunate in not having to await the vindication of another Schliemann or Evans, for recent archeological advances, especially the radiocarbon dating of Colin Renfrew and his team at Cambridge, already have uncovered evidence for the autochthonic origins of European civilization. This, in turn, has provoked a major revision in prehistorical studies, reframing them in terms that more closely accord with the GRECE's "Eurocentrism."[43] And while this revision does not detract from Near Eastern achievements, it should, *Grécistes*

40. Pierre Vial, "Servir la cause des peuples," in *La cause des peuples*, *op. cit.*, p. 67; Guillaume Faye, "Warum wir kämpfen," in *Elemente für die europäische Wiedergeburt* 1 (July 1986).

41. Pierre Vial, "Aux sources de l'Europe," in *éléments* 50 (Spring 1984); Christian Lahalle, "Le peuplement de la Grèce et du basin égéen aux hautes époques," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 43 (December 1985). A recent, though dilettantish variation of the *ex oriente lux* thesis appears in Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiactic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 2 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987-91).

42. "Thème central," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 17 (March-April 1972); Krebs, *Das Thule-Seminar*, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

43. Vial, "Aux sources de l'Europe," *op. cit.*; André Cherpillod, "L'écriture en Europe à l'époque préhistorique," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 50 (1998). Also Colin Renfrew, *Before Civilization: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500-3500 B.C.* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982); Richard Rudgley, *The Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age* (New York: The Free Press, 1998); Chris Scarre, *Exploring Prehistoric Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Barry Cunliffe, ed., *Prehistoric Europe: An Illustrated History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). These recent discoveries had long been suspected: see Geoffrey Bibby, *The Testimony of the Spade* (New York: Merton, 1957).

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argue, alter the conventional view of the continent's "barbarian" origins and its alleged debt to non-European sources.[44]

Grécistes further contend that the historiographical disparaging of archaic Europe, with its culturally negative implications, pales in comparison to the indifference or hostility shown to its Indo-European founders. Despite their pivotal role in prehistory and the popular interest they continue to generate, their study is largely ignored in current university curriculum. Stigmatized by the Nazis' Aryan cult, the Indo-Europeans are studied today in but a few universities, and there only on the margins of what already are marginalized disciplines. Yet they, especially their Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, Latin, and Hellenic families, are the ones, *Grécistes* claim, out of whom the bedrock of European culture was formed. This emphasis on the "Aryan" core of European sensibilities has, to be sure, armed their critics, adepts at *reductio ad Hitlerum*, with potentially explosives charges. But this emphasis is cultural, rather then biological, and is made not because *Grécistes* rate the Indo-Europeans "superior" to other peoples or consider them to be the progenitors of white racial purity, as did Hitler, but because, like Luther, they cannot do otherwise.[45] For better or worse, Europe's identitarian roots are those of

44. The evidence should, but does not necessarily discredit the old diffusionist view. For example, J. M. Roberts, in a typical display of the *ex lux oriente* influence among "Anglo-Saxon" historians, acknowledges the recent evidence that puts Europe's civilizational origins on a par with Near Eastern ones, yet, nonetheless, roots Europe's identity in the "Holy Lands." See *A History of Europe* (New York: Allen Lane, 1996), pp. 12-20, 54.

45. "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 21-22 (Winter 1972-73); March Tarchi, "Prolégomènes à l'unification de l'Europe," in *Crepuscule des blocs, aurore des peuples: XXIIIe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: GRECE, 1990); Charles Champetier, "Anti-utilitarisme: de nouveau clivage," in *éléments* 74 (Spring 1992); Alain de Benoist, "Les Indo-Européens: à la recherche du foyer d'origine," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 49 (1997). *Grécistes* do not view the Indo-Europeans as a racial group, but solely as a linguistic-cultural one. The question of race, contrary to the claims of their critics, is irrelevant here, for all the peoples of archaic Europe, whether Indo-European or non-Indo-European, were Europid ("white"). What is at stake is cultural identity, not biology, though liberal universalists (recognizing "humanity" only as an abstract zoological concept) have had trouble following the logic of this distinction. See Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981), p.174; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race et histoire* (Paris: Denoël, 1987 [1953]), p. 23. Moreover, given the GRECE's opposition to the former Soviet Union and its on-going opposition to the US, it rejects all notions of "racial unity" with the so-called "white world." See Guillaume Faye, "Il n'y a pas de 'Monde Blanc'," in *éléments* 34 (April 1980). This distinction between race and culture would seem, however, to concede too much to the dominant ideology. For a trenchant critique of the implicit equalitarianism undergirding the GRECE's culturalism, see Faye, *La colonisation de l'Europe*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-84, a work that not only revises Faye's earlier position, but one that has brought down the state's judicial terror on this most eminent of former *Grécistes*.

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the peoples who conquered its lands in the 2nd millennium BC, establishing the fundament of its languages, culture, and history. As such, the Indo-Europeans testify to Europe's historical specificity and stand as a challenge to the cosmopolitan pretences of modernists and Christians. Yet, in singling out the Indo-Europeans, *Grécistes* rekindle not only the compromising associations the Nazis brought to them, they commit themselves to an intellectually daunting enterprise. When they began formulating their metapolitical strategy in the late 1960s, Indo-European studies were virtually unknown within the French intelligentsia, even though France was home to one of the great Indo-Europeanists.[46] Moreover, for the longest time (and still today), Indo-European studies were mainly philological, unamenable to the sort of cultural project they hoped to pursue. Only with Georges Dumézil's work in the late 1930s — largely neglected until the GRECE popularized it — did it become possible to infer anything significant about the sociocultural character of Europe's root peoples and challenge the *ex oriente lux* thesis.[47]

Working with a knowledge of twenty Indo-European languages and employing methods that up to then had been reserved for historical linguistics, Dumézil spent a life time comparing the mythological and literary remains of the different Indo-European peoples. In these comparative studies, embracing sixty books and several hundred articles, he related details gleaned from the *Rig Veda*, the Homeric epics, the Irish tales of Cúchulainn, the Norse sagas, and other Indo-European literatures to patterns or configurations that seemed to make up shared wholes and to point to a common origin (or to what Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his decontextualized and dehistoricized adaptation of Dumézil's approach, called "structures").[48] The most significant achievement of these studies was the discovery of a "tripartite ideology,"[49] which, he claimed, shaped

46. Benoist, "Les Indo-Européens," *op. cit.*

47. On Georges Dumézil, see C. Scott Littleton, *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). See also Jean-Claude Rivière, ed., *Georges Dumézil et la découverte des Indo-Européens* (Paris: Copernic, 1979); Jean Varenne, "L'héritage de Georges Dumézil," in *éléments* 62 (Spring 1987). For a critique of his work, see Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil's 'Idéologie Tripartite'* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

48. C. Scott Littleton, "'Je ne suis pas. . . structuraliste': Some Fundamental Differences between Dumézil and Lévi-Strauss," in *Journal of Asian Studies* 34 (November 1974).

49. On the tripartite ideology, see Georges Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartite des Indo-Européens* (Brussels: Latomus, 1958); Jean Haudry, *La religion cosmique des Indo-Européens* (Milan: Arché, 1987); J. P. Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language. Archaeology and Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 130-34.

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the way Indo-Europeans organized their societies, ordered their values and envisaged their religious pantheons. The discovery of tripartition constituted what is arguably the key event in modern Indo-European studies, for the presence of a common world-view "proves," in effect, that these peoples were not merely a language group, but also a culture.[50] Derived from linguistic and literary sources, Dumézil's discovery rests empirically on the historical existence of three castes of men — sages, warriors, and producers — representing the three "functions" or orders responsible for regulating Indo-European society. These functions allegedly gave the Indo-Europeans their distinct cultural style, and later influenced the different national families branching off from their trunk.[51] Although features of this ideology have been found among certain other peoples, Dumézil claimed it was institutionalization, and assumed conscious articulation only among Indo-Europeans, making it the defining element of their culture and the essence of their "living past."[52]

In the *Grécistes*' reading of Dumézil, the tripartite ideology sanctioned principles that not only accorded with Indo-European sensibilities, but enabled the highest representatives of their people to govern, i.e., the wise men and priests who performed the sacred rituals and remembered the old stories, and the warrior aristocrats upon whose courage and self-sacrifice the community's survival depended. By contrast, farmers, stock-herders, craftsmen, traders — the producers — were relegated ideologically to the lowest social order (the third caste)

50. Jean-Claude Rivière, "Pour une lecture de Dumézil," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 21-22 (Winter 1972-1973); Jean Maibre, *Les dieux mandits: Récits de mythologie nordique* (Paris: Copernic, 1978), pp. 21-27.

51. J. H. Griswald, "Trois perspectives mediévales," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 21-22 (Winter 1972-1973). Cf. Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, tr. by A. Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

52. "Georges Dumézil répond aux questions de *Nouvelle Ecole*," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 10 (September 1969); "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 21-22; Jean Haudry, "Die indoeuropäische Tradition als Wurzel unserer Identität," in *Mut zur Identität*, *op. cit.* The non-political Dumézil paid dearly for his discoveries. In the 1980s, a full-scale witchhunt was launched against him, initiated by UCLA historian Carlo Ginsburg, who, in "Mythologie germanique et nazisme. Sur un ancien livre de Georges Dumézil," in *Annales ESC* (July 1985), accused him, in so many words, of Nazism. The charge was then taken up by *Libération* and made the rounds of several politically-correct Parisian journals. The falseness of the charge and the readiness of certain intellectuals to use it to smear one of the century's great scholars, because his work happened to lend credence to non-conformist ideas, has been fully documented in Didier Eribon, *Faut-il brûler Dumézil? Mythologie, science et politique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1992). On the "fascist" epithet as a political ploy for discrediting new ideas, see Hans-Helmuth Knütter, *Die Faschismus Keule. Das letzte Aufgebot der deutschen Linken* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1993). On the "living past," see R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 96-98.

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and refused sovereign authority. In thus conditioning the European *mentalité*, tripartition made wisdom and courage more important than economic-reproductive functions. It also gave culture its high symbols and the power of its defining ideals, pride of place above all other pursuits, unlike modernity's inversion of these values.[53]

Yet, however crucial its role in constituting the basis of European civilization, the tripartite ideology represents but a single facet of the Indo-European heritage to serve as a *Gréciste* foil to the liberal order. The "folk-centric, world-accepting" values animating the Vedic, Homeric, Roman, Celtic, and Germanic traditions of pre-Christian paganism, most of whose pantheons reflect the tripartite ideology, play a no less important role. Because these pagan values and the religiosity they inspired implicitly repudiate Christianity's "world-rejecting" monotheism, *Grécistes* look to them as a way of "returning to ourselves" and of finding there a spirituality appropriate to Europeans disoriented by the disparity between their native identity and the universalist dictates of the Christian/modernist project. This validation of pagan values does not, however, mean that *Grécistes* have taken to worshipping Zeus and Odin. Instead, their metapolitical activities endeavor to recuperate paganism's nominalist avowal of difference, its theophany of the natural world, its heroic, aristocratic conception of man, its marriage of aesthetics and morality, and, above all, its pluralistic rejection of biblical dualism — in order to counter the liberal anti-identitarian currents they oppose.[54] Not unrelatedly, their rejection of the linear conception of history and its unidimensional view of the world follows largely from this adherence to pagan values.

The Wellspring of Being

The difference between *mythos* and *logos* best illustrates the spiritual divide separating Judeo-Christian dualism, with its linear historical vision, from the cyclical, open-ended holism of Indo-European paganism.[55] In

53. Alain de Benoist, "L'ordre," in *Etudes et recherches* 4-5 (January 1977); Jean Haudry, "Linguistique et tradition indo-européennes," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 45 (Winter 1988-89).

54. See Benoist, "La religion de l'Europe," *op. cit.*; Alain de Benoist and La Commission "Traditions et Communauté," in *Les Traditions d'Europe*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1996). More generally, see David L. Miller, *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and R. Faber and R. Schlesier, eds., *Die Restauration der Götter. Antike Religion und Neo-Paganismus* (Würzburg: Konigshausen und Neuman, 1986).

55. Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Jacques Marlaud, *Le renouveau païen dans la pensée française* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1986), p. 24; Giogio Locchi, "Die Zeit der Geschichte," in *Elemente für die europäische Wiedergeburt* 1 (July 1986).

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siding with *mythos*, whose metaphoric images evoke perspectival "truths" unfathomable to analytic method, *Grécistes* take up what they consider to be the more cogent tradition. Although Christianity initially succeeded in branding pagan myth, in contrast to its own alleged historical foundations, as inherently fictitious, representing the fears and irrationalities of early man, the truth claims of *mythos* (not to be confused with mythology) are no less compelling than those of *logos*, whose rationalist procedures of thought (i.e., logic) are "an invention of schoolteachers, not philosophers."[56] *Grécistes* further point out that all thinking is mythic in form, since thought is conceptual, based on images signifying objects and processes ultimately incommensurate with their representation, and thus subject to interpretation. They even note that *logos* itself was originally simply a phase, another of *mythos*' expressions, for the image of the idea precedes and is frequently more pregnant than its discursive formulation.[57] This makes *mythos* not the opponent of reason, but rather its metaphoric expression, which *logos* later renders into the objectivist terms of a subject whose conception of the world derives from a free-floating intellectualism. Finally, as logical proposition ignoring the perspectival nature of truth, *logos* differs from *mythos* in saying nothing about the meaning of the world, and thus of man's historicity.

Contrary to Christians and modernists, *Grécistes* claim that *mythos* (or myth) has little to do with an irrational rendering of a fantasized past. Instead, its main function is to explain how the chaos inherent in the

56. So claims not only the "numinous" school of comparative mythology (Mircea Eliade, Walter F. Otto, Jean-Pierre Vernant *et al.*, to whom the GRECE is close), but also structuralists around Claude Lévi-Strauss and neo-Kantians associated with Ernst Cassirer. See Kurt Hübner, "La recherche sur le mythe: une révolution encore méconnue," in *Krisis* 6 (October 1990). On logic's "unphilosophical" character and its problematic "principle of identity," see Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-36, 170-79, and 165-90; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science,* tr. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), §111; and Alain de Benoist, "Les fausses alternatives," in *La ligne de mire*, *op. cit.*

57. "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 19 (September 1969); Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths? An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination,* tr. by P. Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, *op. cit.*, §344. Even science, whose knowledge of nature is similarly mediated, is a form, however sophisticated, of mythic thought. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), in which the problem of competing paradigms is posed ultimately as an aesthetic one, based less on the procedures of normal science than on culturally-shaped appeals. Cf. J. McKim Malville, *The Fermenting Universe: Myths of Eternal Change* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981); Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" (1929), in *Basic Writings*, tr. by D. F. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). At any rate, *mythos* and *logos* were originally interchangeable terms. See Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 and 54.

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world becomes the cosmos of specific cultural traditions. In this sense, myth immortalizes those "exemplary precedents," however encrusted with legend and poetry, that once occurred and reoccur whenever a people, in response to what becomes the paradigmatic themes of its heritage, imposes its order upon the world.[58] Fictitious or not, these primordial acts embody "truths" about the nature of reality that elude formulaic or analytic proposition, based as they are on a culture's interpretative encounter with it. Through the mythic inscription of these truths and the heritage they found, the fundament of a culturally defined existence is perpetuated. As such, myth treats the past as a living trace, and transmits not the ancient, but the permanent in a heritage, establishing a framework of continuity that renders discontinuity and innovation into a coherent history of tradition. As Mircea Eliade explains, myth is "creative and exemplary," revealing how things come to be, defining their underlying structures, and suggesting the multiple modalities of being they imply.[59] It does not describe reality "objectively," but roots it in a heritage of significance that prescribes and affirms it as a manifestation of original being. Intuitively seized by its believers, mythic truth enables man to engage his world and to participate in its re-creation.[60] Its teachings are thus existentialist, not essentialist; they can never be refuted, only rejected.[61] Indeed, myth has little to do with the rationalist notion of truth *(verum)*, for its power resides not in its correspondence to an object's *noumena*, but in its aesthetic accordance with a state of soul and in its capacity to inspire man's being with *certum*.[62] In this vein, it can be argued that the mythic revelations inscribed in the *Voluspá* or the *Táin Bó Cuailnge* are as cogent as the scientific verities of the *Origin of Species* or the *Principia Mathematica.* Both as existentialist postulate and "child of the imagination," myth apprehends those certitudes which tradition accepts as true. For Benoist, it is what justifies existence.[63]

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58. Roger Caillois, *L'homme et le sacré*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), pp. 132-36.

59. Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, tr. by P. Mairet (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 14-15.

60. Kurt Hübner, *Die Wahrheit des Mythos* (Munich: Beck, 1985), pp. 257-70; Alain de Benoist, "Un mot en quatre lettres," in *éléments* 95 (June 1999).

61. Benoist, "Les mythes européens" (1984), in *Le grain de sable: Jalons pour une fin de siècle* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1994); Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-21.

62. Gilbert Durand, *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginnaire* (Paris: Dunod, 1984), pp. 323-24; Julien Freund, "Une interprétation de Georges Sorel," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 35 (Winter 1979-1980).

63. Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15. Cf. José Ortega y Gasset, *Historical Reason*, tr. by P. W. Silver (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 17-21.

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Likewise, the paradigmatic principles elaborated in mythic accounts of origins generate the unquestioned presuppositions legitimating a people's historical vocation.[64] Its certitudes are summoned whenever a people attempts to re-create its world and hence itself. If there is no myth to preserve the particular truth of its original being — the particular truth (or illusion) that overcomes the world's chaos and creates the values sustaining its will to power — there can be no re-creation. And if there is no re-creation, there can be no destiny, and no people.[65] In other words, myth orients a people in the regeneration of its world through an affirmation of its original inception. Without myth, "every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity," for it is the creative and exemplary force of myth that alone prompts a people to forge their common values into a destiny that presses "upon its experiences the stamp of the eternal."[66] Mythic time is correspondingly reversible, as the origins it recounts are repeated in each act of renewal.[67] Myth, in sum, knows no immutable truth, yet serves as a source of meaning and certitude in an inherently meaningless and uncertain world.[68]

Not coincidentally, the first major thinker to lend himself to the GRECE's historiological project was Nietzsche, for his rejection of the Western metaphysical tradition and his embrace of the old Greek myths to counter the rationalism of the "dialecticians" (Socratic, Christian, or modernist) anticipates many of the *Grécistes'* own concerns. More importantly, in its appeal to "we good Europeans,"[69] his philosophical opus is steeped in historiological issues pertinent to the problems of

64. Alain de Benoist, "Réflexion sur l'identité nationale," in *Une certaine idée de la France: Actes du XIXe colloque national du GRECE* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1985).

65. Marlaud, *Le renouveau païen*, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Vial, "Servir la cause des peuples," *op. cit.*

66. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), §23; Marlaud, *Le renouveau païen*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

67. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, tr. by W. Trask (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1959), p. 68. Also Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, tr. by M. Faber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), §96.

68. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths?*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 14-15; "Les Grecs croyaient à leurs mythes: entretien avec Jean-Pierre Vernant," in *Krisis* 6 (October 1990).

69. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), §56; *The Gay Science*, *op. cit.*, §285 and §341; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, tr. by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1961), "The Vision and the Riddle" and "The Convalescent." Also Phillip Granarolo, *L'individu éternel: L'expérience nietzschéenne de l'éternité* (Paris: Vrin, 1993), p. 37. Cf. M. C. Sterling, "Recent Discussions of Eternal Recurrence: Some Critical Comments," in *Nietzsche Studien* 6 (1977).

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cultural renewal and historical fatigue. From these have emerged not only the most profound and the least understood of his ideas — the thought of Eternal Return — but also the inspiration for the *Grécistes'* confrontation with the finitudes and determinisms of the Christian/modernist project.

Contrary to the usual interpretations, Eternal Return does not imply a literal repetition of the past. It is an axiological, not a cosmological principle, representing the will for metamorphosis in a world that is itself in endless metamorphoses. In fact, it is a principle of becoming that knows neither beginning nor end, but only the process of life returning to itself. As such, Eternal Return affirms "will to power" — characteristic of the mythic spirit of Indo-European paganism — and not the dialecticians' negation, sublation, and evolution which follow *logos* in cleaving to an objective and thus otherworldly truth. Against the dialecticians' narrow fixation on reason and self-preservation, Nietzsche exalts life's ascending instincts and the old noble virtues that sought to forge those instincts into a heroically subjective culture. Homer's Greeks, he well knew, were dead and gone. Yet, whenever "the eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down," "opening" the future to the past, he thought the epic spirit, as that which bears returning, might be roused and something analogously creative achieved.[70] Life, he argued, is not a predetermined and timeless essence with an inscribed *telos*. As being, it is becoming, and becoming is will to power. Eternal Return represents an affirmation of man's original being, an assertion of his difference with others, and, in its infinite repertoire of exemplary past actions, the anticipation of whatever his future might hold. In this sense, its recurring past functions as a "selective thought," putting memory's endless assortment of experience in service to life. Man has only to envisage a future similar to some select facet of the past to initiate its realization.[71] The past cannot exist, then, as a momentary point on a line, a duration measurable in mechanical clock time, understandable as an onward succession of consecutive "nows." Rather, it recurs as a "genealogical" differential, whose origin inheres in its wilful assertion and becomes recoverable for futural re-enactments that seek to continue life's adventure.[72] In a word, the past never ends. It returns in

70. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, *op. cit.*, §24; Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit, op. cit.*, p. 74; Armin Mohler, "Devant l'histoire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 27-28 (Winter 1974-1975).

71. Paul Chassard, *Nietzsche: Finalisme et histoire* (Paris: Copernic, 1977), p. 174; Clément Rosset, *La force majeure* (Paris: Minuit, 1983), pp. 87-89; Jean-Pierre Martin, "Mythe et cosmologie," in *Krisis* 6 (October 1990).

72. Granarolo, *L'individu éternel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-52.

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every successive affirmation of will, in every conscious exertion of memory, in every instant when will and memory become interchangeable. This makes it reversible, repeatable, and recoverable.

Moreover, the past of Nietzsche's Eternal Return is of a whole with other temporalities. One can never be younger, but as time advances, the future recedes. In the present, these temporalities meet. Consequently, the human sense of time encompasses an infinity of temporalities, as past, present, and future converge in every passing moment. And since this infinity is all of a piece, containing all the dimensions of time, as well as all the acts of man, affirmed in their entirety "whenever we affirm a single moment of it," the present acts as an intersection, not a division, between past and future.[73] Linked to this polychronous totality, man's will accesses time's infinity, where there is no prescribed end. As to historical teleology or finality, for Nietzsche they are merely a derivative of Christian/modernist nihilism, with its indifference to life's temporal play. In response to the prompting of his will, it is man, as he participates in the eternal recurrence of his original affirmation, who imposes order on the world's underlying chaos, and man alone who shapes the future — not some external, supra-human force that goes by the name of God, Progress, or the laws of Historical Materialism.[74] In the spirit of the ancient Hellenes, who treated life's transience as the conjuncture of the actual and the eternal, of men and gods, Nietzsche's Eternal Return testifies to the completeness of the present moment.[75]

In addition to affirming willful action, Nietzsche's breaks with linear temporality infuses man with the idea that he always has the option of living the thought of Eternal Return. Just as every past was once a prefiguration of a sought-after future, every future arises from a past anticipation, that can be anticipated again. "The impossible," as teleologically decreed, "is not possible."[76] Indeed, in seeking to overcome that which resists, life's will to power is manifested. Only belief in the underlying unity and purpose of "creation," the *logos,* resigns man to time's alleged eschatological properties. Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the antithesis of modern man, is steeped in the longest

73. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, tr. by W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967), §1032.

74. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power, op. cit.,* §706; Chassard, *La philosophie de l'histoire dans la philosophie de Nietzsche*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-18.

75. Eugen Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960), pp. 75-92.

76. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, *op. cit.*, §639.

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memory, not because he bears the accumulated wisdom of the past, but because he rejects the weariness of those governed by an imagined necessity and instead imposes his will, as an assertion of original being, upon the vagaries of time.[77] This validation of ancient affirmations that identifies being with becoming should not, however, be taken to mean that the genealogical spirit of mythic origins — the spirit of an eternally open and purposeless world subject solely to the active force of will — gives man the liberty to do whatever he desires. The limits he faces remain those posed by the conditions of his epoch, as well as by his nature. In the language of social science, Nietzsche fully acknowledges the inescapable constraints of structures, systematic forces, or what Comte called "social statics." Yet, within these limits, all that is possible is possible, for man's activities are always prospectively open to the possibilities inherent in the moment, whenever these possibilities are appropriated according to his own determinations: i.e., whenever man engages the ceaseless struggle that is life. "Necessity," Nietzsche argues, "is not a fact, but an interpretation."[78] What ultimately conditions historical activity is less what acts on man from the outside ("objectivity") than on what emanates from the inside (will), as he "evaluates" the forces affecting him. Nature, history, and the world may therefore affect the way he lives, but not as a "mechanical necessity."

Given this rejection of immanent and transcendental determinisms, Nietzsche's concept of history is far from being a literal recapitulation of the traditional cyclical concept. According to Eliade, the thought of Eternal Return found in archaic societies implies an endless repetition of time, i.e., another sort of "line" (a circle) or necessity refusing history.[79] By contrast, Nietzsche eschews time's automatic repetition by seeing Eternal Return in non-cyclical, as well as non-linear terms. The eternity of the past and the eternity of the future, he posits, necessitate the eternity of the present, and the eternity of the present cannot but mean that whatever

77. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Of the Vision and the Riddle," *op. cit.* "Origins" for Nietzsche do not bear the timeless essence of things, but rather the unencumbered expression of their original being, the *Herkunft* that serves as *Erbschaft*. See Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay II, §12; *The Gay Science, op. cit.*, §83. Cf. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, tr. by D. F. Boucard and S. Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

78. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, *op. cit.*, §552; also §70; Giorgio Locchi, "Ethologie et sciences sociales," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 33 (Summer 1979).

79. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History*, tr. by W. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 36, 85-86, 117; also Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-10.

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has happened or will happen is always at hand in thought, ready to be re-potentiated.[80] In assuming that being is becoming, chance the verso of necessity, and will the force countering as well as partaking in the forces of chaos, the eternity of the Nietzschean past inevitably reverberates in the eternity of the future, and does so in a life-affirming manner.[81] The past of Eternal Return is thus nostalgic, not for the past, but for the future.

As *Grécistes* understand it, Nietzsche's concept of historical time is spherical. In time's "eternally recurring noon-tide," the different temporal dimensions of man's mind form a "sphere" in which thoughts of the past, present, and future revolve around one another, taking on new significance as each of their moments becomes a center in relation to the others. Within this polychronous sphere, the past does not occur but once and then freeze behind us, nor does the future follow according to determinants situated along a sequential course of development. Rather, past, present, and future inhere in every moment, never definitively superseded, never left entirely behind.[82] "O my soul," his Zarathustra exclaims, "I taught you to say 'today' as well as 'one day' and 'formerly' and to dance your dance over every Here and There and Over-There."[83] Whenever the Janus-headed present alters its view of these temporalities, its vision of past and future simultaneously changes. The way one stands in the present thus determines how everything recurs.[84] And since every exemplary past was once the prefiguration of a sought-after future, these different temporalities have the potential of coming into new alignment, as they phenomenologically flow into one another. Recollected from memory and anticipated in will, the past, like the future, is always at hand, ready to be re-realized.[85] As this happens, and a particular past is "redeemed" from the Heraclitean flux to forge a particular future, the "it was" becomes a "thus I willed it."[86] In this fashion, time functions like a sphere that rolls forward, toward a future anticipated in one's image

80. Chassard, *La philosophie de l'histoire dans la philosophie de Nietzsche*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

81. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, *op. cit.* §109.

82. Alain de Benoist, *Vue de droite: Anthologie critique des idées contemporaines* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), pp. 298-99.

83. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Of the Great Longing," *op. cit.* [translation modified.]

84. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science, op. cit.*, §233; Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, tr. by D. F. Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 245; Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-40.

85. Alain de Benoist, "Fondements nominalistes d'une attitude devant la vie," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 33 (June 1979); "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 24 (Winter 1973-1974).

86. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Of Redemption," *op. cit.*

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of the past.[87] Existence, it follows, "begins in every instant; the ball There rolls around every Here. The middle [i.e., the present] is everywhere. The path of eternity is crooked."[88] Moreover, this recurrence goes beyond mere repetition, for the re-enactment of an archaic configuration is invariably transfigured by its altered context. Likewise, the conventional opposition between past and future gives way before it, as the past becomes a harbinger of the future and the future a recurrence of the past.

When the man of Eternal Return, who rejects the resentment and bad conscience of the teleologists, steps fully into his moment, Nietzsche counsels: *Werde das, was Du bist!* He does not advocate the Marxist-Hegelian *Aufhebung*, liberal progress, or Christian salvation, but a heroic assertion that releases him from the nihilistic or deterministic exhaustion of the present and imbues him with the archaic confidence to forge a future true to his higher, life-affirming instincts. Becoming what you are thus entails both a return and an overcoming. Through the longest memory, man ("whose horizon encompasses thousands of years past and future") returns to and thus transvalues the spirit of those foundational acts which marked his ancestors' triumph over the world's chaos; at the same time, this memory shaping his sense of history aids him in overcoming the resentment that dissipates his will and the bad conscience that leaves him adrift in the random stream of becoming. In the process, the will to power implied in Eternal Return compels him to confront what he believes to be the essential and eternal in life, imparting, in turn, something of the essential and eternal to the "marvelous uncertainty" of his own finite existence, as he goes beyond himself in imitating the gods. In this way, wilful becoming defines the character of his being, as the return of the essential and the eternal reaffirms both his origins and the values — the mode of existence — he proposes for his future. Since such a disposition is framed in the genealogical context of a primordial origin, Eternal Return does not foster an atomized, discontinuous duration, in which becoming is out of joint with being, but a self-justifying coherence that unites individual fate and collective destiny in a higher creativity — even if this "coherence" is premised on the belief that the world lacks an inherent significance or purpose. Based on a select appropriation of the past that serves as a principle of value, each individual act becomes inseparable from its historical world, just as the historical world, product

87. Giorgio Locchi, "L'histoire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 27-28 (January 1976); and, from the same author, *Nietzsche, Wagner e il mito sovrumanista* (Rome: Akropolis, 1982).

88. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "The Convalescent," *op. cit.*

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of multiple individual valuations, comes to pervade every individual act. "Every great human being," Nietzsche writes, "exerts a retroactive force: for his sake all of history is placed in the balance again."[89] Whenever, then, the thought of Eternal Return puts the past and future in the balance, as the present casts its altering light on them, it reestablishes "the innocence of becoming" which allows the active man, the heir to past valuations, to decide his own fate — in contrast to the life-denigrating man of mechanical or teleological necessity, who fixes his past and awaits his future as if the world's course were already ordained.[90]

The final, and today most important component of the GRECE's historical philosophy comes from Heidegger, whose anti-modernist thought began to influence its metapolitical project, and to supplant that of Nietzsche in the early 1980s.[91] Like the author of *Zarathustra,* Heidegger rejects Christian/modernist metaphysics and views man and history, being and becoming, as inseparable and incomplete. The past is gone and will not return, but its significance is neither left behind nor ever permanently cast. Further, when experienced as authentic historicity, it "is anything but what is past. It is something to which I can return again and again."[92] Thus, while the past belongs "irretrievably to an earlier time," it may still exist in the form of a heritage or an identity that is able to "determine 'a future' 'in the present'."[93] In this spirit, Heidegger claims "the original essence of being is time."[94]

Unlike other species of sentient life, Heideggerian man has no predetermined or ultimate ontological foundation: he alone is responsible for his being and its potentiality. Indeed, he is that being whose "being is itself an issue," for his existence is never fixed or complete, but open and

89. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, *op. cit.*, §34.

90. Granarolo, *L'individu éternel*, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-44; "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 15 (March-April 1971). Cécile Guignard-Vanuxem probably best captures the civilizational significance of these different concepts of time in *Vercingétorix, le défi des druides* (Paris: Eds. Cheminements, 1997).

91. "Lectures de Heidegger," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 37 (April 1982). For those inclined to follow the fraudulent argumentation of Victor Farias and approach Heidegger as preeminently a "Nazi thinker," they might consult Silvio Vietta, *Heidegger, critique du national-socialisme et de technique*, tr. by J. Ollivier (Paris: Pardès, 1993); Jean-Pierre Blanchard, *Martin Heidegger, philosophe incorrect* (Paris: L'Æncre, 1997); and Alexander Schwan, *Politische Philosophie im Denken Heideggers*, 2nd ed. (Opladen, 1989).

92. Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, tr. by W. McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 19.

93. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), §79.

94. Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, *op. cit.*, §13b.

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transient.[95] He alone leads his life and is, *ipso facto*, what he becomes. Man is thus compelled to "make something of himself," and this entails that he "care" about his *Dasein*. As being-in-the-world, i.e., as something specific to and inseparable from a historical-cultural context, human *Dasein* is experienced as an on-going possibility (inner, rather than contingent) that projects itself toward a future that is "not yet actual." Relatedly, the possibility man seeks in the world into which he is "thrown" is conditioned by temporal conditions, for time is not only the open horizon against which he is thrown, it is the ground on which he realizes himself. Because time "draws everything into its motion," the possibility man seeks in the future (his project) is conditioned by the present situating him and the past affecting his sense of possibility. *Dasein's* projection cannot, then, but come "toward itself in such a way that it comes back," anticipating its possibility as something that "has been" and is still present at hand.[96] The three temporal dimensions (ecstases) of man's consciousness are, therefore, elicited whenever some latent potential or possibility is pursued.[97] Birth and death, along with everything in between, inhere in all his moments, for *Dasein* equally possesses and equally temporalizes past, present, and future, conceived not as fleeting now-points, but as simultaneous dimensions of mindful existence.[98] And though it occurs "in time," *Dasein's* experience of time — temporality — is incomparable with ordinary clock or calendar time, which moves progressively from past to present to future, as the flow of "nows" arrive and disappear. Instead, its temporality proceeds from the anticipated future (whose ultimate possibility is death), through the inheritance of the past, to the lived present. Thus, *Dasein*'s time is not durational, in the quantitative, uniform way it is for natural science or "common sense," but existential, i.e., experienced ecstatically as the present thought of an anticipated future is "recollected" and made meaningful in terms of past references.

Because the "what has been, what is about to be, and the presence" (the "ecstatical unity of temporality") reach out to one another in every conscious moment and influence the way man lives his life, *Dasein* is necessarily infused with the historical. "History," however, should not to be confused with the sum of momentary actualities" which historians fabricate into narratives; rather, it is "an acting and being acted upon

95. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §79; Benoist, "Un mot . . . ," *op. cit.*
96. *Ibid.*, §65.
97. *Ibid.*, §69 and §72; Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
98. Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, tr. by J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 11-15; Benoist, "La religion de l'Europe," *op. cit.*

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which pass through the *present*, which are determined from out of the future, and which take over the past."[99] When man chooses a possibility, he makes present what he will be through an appropriation of what he has been.[100] This decision has nothing arbitrary or willful about it, but follows from the process that allows him to open himself to and "belong to the truth of being," as that truth is manifested in its ecstatical unity. For the same reason, this decision does not imply the past's triumph over the present and future, for it is made to free thought — and life — from the inertia of what already has been thought and lived.

Man's project has little to do with causal factors acting on his existence from "outside" (what in conventional history, which Heidegger calls *Historie*,[101] is the purely factual or "scientific" account of past events), and everything to do with the complex ecstatical consciousness shaping his view of possibility (i.e., with the ontological basis of human temporality, *Geschichte*, which "stretches" *Dasein* through the past, present, and future, as *Dasein* is "constituted in advance"). Because this ecstatical consciousness allows man to anticipate and to authenticate his future, *Dasein* remains constantly in play, never frozen in an external

99. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

100. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §65.

101. *Ibid.*, §72, §76, and §79. The distinction between the "selective" character of memory, in its function as a people's cult of remembrance, and the scientific impulse of history, as it breaks with moral or ideological judgment, is emphasized in Alain de Benoist's *Communisme et nazisme: 25 réflexions sur le totalitarisme au XXe siècle* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1998), pp. 9-13. In pointing out that memory demands affiliation and history distance, Benoist sides with "history" whenever the argument turns on the "facts" — the "objective truth" — of an issue. This, however, is a point whose problematic relation to an identitarian philosophy of history *Grécistes* have failed to clarify. As Heidegger argues, the "objective truth" of the professional historian is usually an evasion of historical understanding, insofar as this truth, based on scientific methods and rules of procedures, is mainly an expression of modernity's calculative logic: i.e., the factual explanation of "what is" is not necessarily the same as a knowing understanding, or, said differently, what is scientifically correct may not be historically/ontologically true. Although Heidegger's distinction between correctness (in the sense of correspondence) and truth (as enowning being) is relatively unambivalent (see *Contributions to Philosophy, op. cit.*, §76), Benoist often marshalls the "facts" against the selective memory of those with whom he polemicizes, assuming that memory based on distortion, ignorance, or repression is, *ipso facto*, at odds with history, and that "facts" and "history" ought to be understood in the conventional, i.e., objectivist, sense. While this suggests that the GRECE's historical philosophy is not to be confused with an identitarian solipsism, it still leaves unanswered the question of how "truth" relates to "fact." Heidegger and the anti-empiricist tradition holds that truth, expressing being which is neither subjective nor objective, but a "happening unfolding" in the world, alone orders fact. Benoist, though, seems to hedge his argument here, conflating fact and truth in ways that would be unacceptable to Heidegger. This is especially evident in the various articles devoted to "Mémoire et histoire" in *L'écume et les galet: 10 ans d'actualité vue d'ailleurs* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 2000).

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world of essences or bound to the linearity of subject-object relations. Further, the events historically situating it do not happen "just once for all nor are they something universal," but represent past possibilities that are potentially recuperable for futural endeavors. The notion of an irretrievable past simply does not make sense for Heidegger, for the past is always at hand. Its thought and reality are irreparably linked: its meaning is part of man, part of his world, and invariably changes as his project and his perspective changes. The past, then, is not to be seen in the same way as a scientist observes his data. It is not something independent of belief or perspective that can be grasped *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. Rather, its significance (and even its "factual" depiction) is mediated and undergoes ceaseless revision as man lives and reflects on his lived condition.[102] This frames historical understanding in existential terms, with the "facts" of past events becoming meaningful to the degree that they belong to his "story," i.e., when what "has been" still "is" and "can be." In Heidegger's language, projection is premised on thrownness. While such an anti-substantialist understanding of history is likely to appear fictitious to those viewing it from the outside, "objectively," without participating in the possibilities undergirding it, Heidegger argues that all history is "experienced" in this way, for what "has been" is meaningful only to the degree that it is recuperable for the future. As long, therefore, as the promise of the past remains something still living, still to come, it is not a disinterested, *apriori* aspect of something no longer present. Neither is it mere prologue, a stepping stone leading the way to a more rational future, but something with which we have to identify if we are to resolve the challenges posed by our project, for only knowledge of who we have been enables us to be who we are.

Like Nietzsche, Heidegger believes that whenever *Dasein* "runs ahead toward the past," the "not yet actual" opens to the inexhaustible possibilities of what "has been" and what "can be." He also follows Nietzsche in viewing the regenerative impulses of mythic time as inherent to history. In thus emphasizing man's inherent temporality, both Heidegger and Nietzsche reject the abstract universalism of the mechanical and teleological conceptions of becoming (suitable for measuring matter in motion or the Spirit's progression toward the Absolute), just as they both dismiss decontextualized concepts of being

102. Robert Steuckers, "Conception de l'homme et Révolution conservatrice: Heidegger et son temps," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 37 (April 1982); Charles Champetier, *Homo Consumans: Archéologie du don et de la dépense* (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1994), p. 98.

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(whether in the form of the Christian soul, Descartes' *ego cogito,* Marx's species man, or Rawls' disembodied individual). Heidegger, however, differs from Nietzsche in making being, not will, the key to temporality. Nietzsche, he claims, neither fully rejected the metaphysical tradition he opposed nor saw beyond beings to being.[103] While denying modernity's faith in progress and perpetual overcoming (the *Aufhebung* which implies not only transcendence, but a leaving behind), Nietzsche's "will to power" allegedly perpetuates modernity's transcendental impulse by positing a subjectivity that is not "enowned" by being. As a possible corrective to this assumed failing, Heidegger privileges notions of *Andenken* (the recollection that recovers and renews tradition) and *Verwendung* (which is a going beyond that, unlike *Aufhebung*, is also an acceptance and a deepening) — notions implying not simply the inseparability of being and becoming, but becoming's role in the unfolding, rather than the transcendence of being.[104]

Despite these differences, the anti-metaphysical, anti-modernist aims Nietzsche and Heidegger share makes them both apposite allies of the GRECE's philosophical project. This is especially evident in the importance they attribute to becoming and to origins. Heidegger, for example, argues that whenever being is separated from becoming and deprived of temporality, as it is in the Christian/modern *logos*, then being (in this case, abstract being, rather than being-in-the-world) becomes identified with the present, a now-point, subject to the determinisms governing the inorganic objects of Newtonian physics.[105] This implicit denial of ecstatical temporality allegedly causes the prevailing philosophical tradition to "forget" that being exists in time, as well as space, and is not an essence posited by God or the laws of nature.[106] By rethinking being in terms of human temporality and restoring it to becoming, Heidegger, like Nietzsche, makes time the horizon of all existence, thereby freeing the existential from the inorganic properties of space and matter. Moreover, since it is inseparable from becoming, and since becoming occurs in a world-with-others, being is necessarily situated in a "context of significance" saturated with history and tradition. As man pursues his project in terms of present

103. Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, tr. by W. Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

104. Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity*, tr. by J. R. Synder (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 51-64.

105. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §5; Miller, *The New Polytheism, op. cit.*, p. 48.

106. Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13; Guillaume Faye and Patrick Rizzi, "Pour en finir avec le nihilisme," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 37 (Spring 1982).

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worldly concerns, the various existential modes of these concerns, as well as the "world" itself, are informed by interpretations stemming from a history of interpretation. Just as "every age must write its own history afresh" (R. G. Collingwood), every man is compelled to engage his existence in light of what has been handed down to him — in light, in other words, of the totality of meaning and purpose defining his world.[107] His future-directed project is indeed only conceivable in terms of the world into which he is thrown. Man therefore makes his history, but does so as a "bearer of meaning," whose convictions, beliefs, and representations have been bestowed by the past.[108] This meaning-laden matrix constitutes the "t/here" *[da]* in *Dasein*, without which being (*qua* being-in-the-world) is inconceivable.[109] And because there can be no *Sein* without a *da,* no existence without a specific framework of meaning and purpose, man, in his ownmost nature *qua* being, is inseparable from this matrix that "makes possible what has been projected."[110] Being is indeed inherent only in "the enowning of the grounding of the t/here."[111]

In contrast to inauthentic *Dasein* that "temporalizes itself in the mode of a making-present which does not await but forgets," accepting what is usually taken as the imperatives of being (but which, situated as it is in "now time," is usually a corrupted or sclerotic transmission confusing self-absorption in the present with the primordial sources of life), authentic *Dasein* "dredges" its heritage in order to "remember" or to retrieve the truth of primordial possibility and to "make it productively its own."[112] The more authentically the potential of this "inexhaustible wellspring" is brought to light, the more profoundly man becomes "what he is."[113] In this sense, authentic historicity "understands history as the 'recurrence' of the possible."[114] Here, the "possible" is "what does not

107. R. G. Collingwood, "The Philosophy of History" (1930), in *Essays in the Philosophy of History*, ed. by William Debbins (New York: Garland, 1985), p. 138. Heidegger, though, goes a step further than Collingwood: each generation must not only confront the heritage of its past, but appropriate what it finds "essential" in it in order to establish the "upon which" it projects its being. See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §65.

108. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §5.

109. *Ibid.*, §29; *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §120 and §255. To see *Dasein* as pure existence, "stripped of all security and standing," causes many commentators to misread Heidegger. For example, Karl Löwith, "The Political Implications of Heidegger's Existentialism" (1946), in *New German Critique* 45 (Fall 1988).

110. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §65.

111. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §92.

112. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §6 and §79.

113. *Ibid.*, §74; "Itinéraire," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 17 (March-April 1972).

114. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §75.

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pass," what remains, what lasts, what is deeply rooted in oneself, one's people, one's world; it is the heritage of historical meaning that preserves what has been posited in the beginning and what will be true in the future.[115] "I know," Heidegger said in 1966, "that everything essential and everything great originated from the fact that man. . . was rooted in a tradition."[116] By contrast, the uprooted, detemporalized man of modern thought is deprived not only of a means of rising above his necessarily impoverished, because isolated self, he lacks access to the creative force of his original being and the "greatness" — the truth — it portends. When Heideggerian man is "great" and rises to the possibilities latent in his existence, he invariably returns to his autochthonous source, resuming there a heritage that is not to be confused with the causal properties of his thrown condition, but with a being whose authenticity is manifested in its becoming. "Being . . . proclaims destiny, and hence control of tradition."[117] Here again, Heidegger concurs with Nietzsche, linking man's existence with the "essential swaying of meaning" that occurred *ab origine,* when his forefathers created the possibilities that remain open for him to realize. From the presence of this original being, enduring in tradition and constituting its truth, man is existentially sustained and authenticated, just as a tree thrives when rooted in its native soil.[118]

Although a self-conscious appropriation of origins does not resolve the problems posed by the human condition, it does free man from present fixations with the inauthentic, and remind him of the possibilities inherent in his existence.[119] The "first beginning" also brings other beginnings into play, for it is the ground of all subsequent groundings.[120] Without a

115. "What 'is' is not current events and neither is it what is present right now. What 'is' is what approaches from what has-been and, as this, is what approaches." The inability to discern this difference between "now" and "what is" is linked to the present era's "flight from history." See Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, tr. by R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 80-81. The development of modern historical studies and what Nietzsche facetiously terms the "historical sense" has, relatedly, occurred in a period that has almost entirely divested the past of any "real" meaning and made a hedonistic cult out of the moment.

116. "'Only a God Can Save Us': *Der Spiegel* Interview with Martin Heidegger" (1966), in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. by Richard Wolin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 106; also Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §74.

117. Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Nature of Metaphysics" (1957), in *Essays in Metaphysics*, tr. by K. F. Leidecker (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960), p. 44; *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, § 91.

118. Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

119. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §76.

120. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §3 and §20.

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"reconquest" of *Dasein's* original commencement (impossible in the linear conception, with its irreversible and deracinating progressions), there can never be another commencement: only in reappropriating a heritage, whose beginning is already a completion, does man come back to himself, achieve authenticity, and inscribe himself in the world of his own time. Indeed, only from the store of possibility intrinsic to his originary genesis, never from the empty abstractions postulated by the universal reason transcending historicity, does he learn the finite, historically-situated tasks "demanded" of him and open himself to the possibility of his world. Commencement, accordingly, lies in front of, never behind him, for the initial revelation of being is necessarily anticipated in each new beginning, as each new beginning draws on its source, accessing what has been preserved for posterity and rediscovering being's highest possibilities. Because the "truth of being" found in origins informs *Dasein's* project and causes it to "come back to itself," what is prior invariably prefigures what is posterior. In this sense, the past is future. History functions not as a progression from beginning to end, but, rather, as a return backwards, to foundations, where the possibility of being remains ripest. This makes origins all important. They are never mere antecedent or *causa prima*, as modernity's inorganic logic holds, but "that from which and by which something is what it is and as it is. . . . [They are] the source of its essence" [i.e., its ownmost particularity] and the way truth "comes into being. . . [and] becomes historical."[121] As Benoist puts it, the "original" (unlike modernity's *novum)* is not that which comes once and for all, but that which comes and is repeated every time being unfolds in its authenticity.[122] In this sense, origins represent the primordial unity of existence and essence affirmed in myth. And because origins, as "enowned" being, denote possibility, not the purely "factual" or "momentary" environment affecting its framework, *Dasein* achieves self-constancy (authenticity) whenever it is projected on the basis of its original inheritance, for *Dasein* "comes toward itself" only when anticipating its end as an extension of its beginning.[123] Thus, origins

121. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935), in *Basic Writings*, pp. 149 and 187; Molnar and Benoist, *L'éclipse du sacré*, *op. cit.*, p. 215. In Diwald's epic history of the German nation, the "narrative" begins with the Yalta Conference of 1945 and "runs backwards" to the founding of the first *Reich*, in what is the most extraordinary historiographical illustration of this key Heideggerian idea. See Helmut Diwald, *Geschichte der Deutschen* (Frankfurt/M: Ullstein, 1978).

122. Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

123. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §65; Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

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designate identity and destiny, not causation (the "wherein," not the "wherefrom"). Relatedly, the historical-spiritual world in which *Dasein* originates persists throughout life, preserving what "has been" and providing the basis for what "continues to be," given that origins are not "out there," but part of us and who we are. Because origins constitute the ground of all authentic existence, "gathering into the present what is always essential," what "will be" springs ever anew from what "has been."[124] This confrontation with "the beginning of our being," as Benoist reiterates, is requisite for "other, more original commencements."[125]

The original repose of being that saves man from the "bustle of mere events and machinations" is not, however, easily accessed. To return *Dasein* to its ground and to "recapture the beginning of historical-spiritual existence in order to transform it into a new beginning" is possible only through "an anticipatory resoluteness" that turns against the present's mindless routines.[126] Such an engagement (and here Heidegger's "revolutionary conservative" opposition to the established philosophical tradition is categorical) entails a fundamental questioning of the "rootless and self-seeking freedoms" concealing the truth of being — a questioning that draws "its necessity from the deepest history of man."[127] For this reason, Heidegger (like *Grécistes*) sees history as a "choice for heros," demanding the firmest resolve and the greatest risk, as man, in anxious confrontation with the heritage given him, because of his origins, seeks to realize an indwelling possibility in the face of an amnesic or obscurant conventionality.[128] This heroic choice ought not, however, to be confused with the subjectivist propensities of liberal individualism. A heroic conception of history demands action based on what is true and "original" in tradition, not on what is arbitrary or wilful. Similarly, this conception is anything but reactionary, for its appropriation of origins privileges the most radical opening of being.

Finally, this heritage that becomes meaningful when choosing a project, this reaching forward that reaches back, validates what Heidegger

124. Martin Heidegger, "The Anaximander Fragment" (1946), in *Early Greek Thinking*, tr. by D. F. Krell and F. A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1984), p. 18.

125. Benoist, "La religion de l'Europe," *op. cit.*

126. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 and 95; Benoist, "La religion de l'Europe," *op. cit.*

127. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 6; *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §117 and §184.

128. Faye, *Les nouveaux enjeux idéologiques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 and 78; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §74.

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calls "fate."[129] In his definition, fate is the "enowning" embrace, not causality's fatalistic acceptance, of the heritage of culture and history into which man is thrown at birth. In embracing this heritage, i.e., in taking over the unchosen circumstances of his community and generation, man necessarily identifies with the collective destiny of his people, as he grounds his *Dasein* in the truth of his "ownmost particular historical facticity."[130] This makes individual identity inseparable from communal identity, as being-in-the-world recognizes its being-with-others *(Mitsein)* and accepts its participation in the larger existence of its people. Against the detemporalized, deracinated individual of liberal thought, "liberated" from organic ties and conceived as a phenomenal "inside" separated from an unknowable "outside," Heideggerian man achieves authenticity through a resolute appropriation of the multi-temporal, interdependent ties he shares with his community. He makes himself out of the immediacy of his world, as well as what has been bequeathed to him by his forefathers and what is to be passed on to his heirs. In so doing, he affirms his mindful involvement in the time and space of his own destined existence, along with the destiny of his people's existence. The community of one's people (*Mitsein*) becomes, then, "the *in* which, *out of* which, and *for* which history happens."[131] And because authentic *Dasein* is unavoidably *Mitsein,* human existence is quintessentially social. *Dasein's* social nature has, though, little to do with the thoughtless conventions of everyday life, but rather inheres in the very texture of human Being and in that which is ownmost to a people. For this reason, *Dasein's* pursuit of possibility, even in opposing the prevailing conventions for the sake of individual authenticity, is necessarily a "co-historizing" with a community, a co-historizing that converts the legacy of the far-distant past into the basis of a meaningful future.[132] In fact, history to Heidegger is possible only because *Dasein's* individual fate — its inner necessity — connects with a larger social-historical necessity that struggles against the perennial forces of decay and dissolution, as a people seeks "to take history back unto itself." The destiny it shares with its people is, indeed, what grounds *Dasein* in historicity and links it to the heritage that determines and is determined by it.[133]

129. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §74.
130. Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §11.
131. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
132. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, §74.
133. *Ibid.*, §74; Benoist, *L'empire intérieur*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26. This merger of individual fate and collective destiny, it might be noted, intends not the sublation of the individual ego, but rather its enrootment and growth.

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The Future of the Past

In the present, the past and future co-exist — as memory or tradition, anticipation or project. It is up to man to determine how to relate to these different temporalities. From pagan myth and the works of Nietzsche and Heidegger, *Grécistes* propound a historical philosophy that endeavors to free Europeans from the deculturating determinisms of the Christian/modernist project. Following Guillaume Faye, this philosophy may be called "archeofuturism," for it posits that there can be no destining future without an original pre-destination.[134] If Europeans are to regain the creative spirit of their being and to play a historical role again, they have no alternative but to rediscover "the original essence of their identity." This obliges them to reappropriate their longest memories and to face the future with the conviction of their ancestral lineage. Like Plato's *anamnesis,* this recovery seeks to release them from time's irreversibility, and make possible another beginning. If, on the other hand, Europeans continue to forget their origins and reject the "European idea" as their *myth fondateur*, archeofuturists fear that they are likely to succumb to the "end of history," where the past ceases to return and the future folds in on an eternal "now."[135]

Archeofuturism's emphasis on origins should not be taken to imply that Europeans are bound to repeat the foundational acts that defined their forbearers, such as occurs in "cold societies"[136] (i.e., those primitive communities whose synchronic principles play a commanding role in the thought of Lévi-Strauss and other anti-historical thinkers). Instead of perpetuating the identitarian vestiges of a former golden age, archeofuturists seek only the original impetus of archaic possibilities so as to create new ones. Indeed, identity for them is real only when under construction, deconstruction, or reconstruction. "We," Benoist writes, "assume a heritage in order to continue it or to re-found it."[137] It is, he argues, neither rationale for present conditions nor occasion for folkloric revival, but simply

134. "Archeofuturism" is a term that *Grécistes* have yet to embrace. See Guillaume Faye, *L'Archéofuturisme* (Paris: L'Ænore, 1998).

135. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *op. cit.*, "Prologue," §5; cf. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989).

136. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale* (Paris: Plon, 1973), ch. 2. Cf. Giorgio Locchi, "Histoire et société: critique de Lévi-Strauss," in *Nouvelle Ecole* 17 (March 1972). Benoist has called America a "cold society," frozen in an "eternal present," without a past or a future. See Herte and Nigra, "Il était une fois l'Amerique," *op. cit.*, p. 92

137. Benoist, *Les idées à l'endroit*, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Robert de Herte, "Le retour des dieux," in *éléments* 27 (Winter 1978).

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requisite for a meaningful future.[138] Archeofuturism posits, then, neither a return nor a repetition, but only an unfolding of identity on the basis of the history and culture that situate it. Unlike the denizens of Lévi-Strauss' cold societies, Europeans attuned to the Faustian possibilities of their world invent, improvise, and make new choices that endeavor to begin the beginning again — "with all the strangeness, darkness, insecurity that attend a true beginning."[139] It is, therefore, the regenerative impulse of the Indo-European heritage, not its nostalgic re-generation, that reconciles past and future, origin and project.[140] Archeofuturists feel Europeans do justice to who they are only when they look forward, providing their heritage another opening to the future. In Heidegger's formulation, "remembrance of [our] inception is not a flight into the past, but readiness for what is to come."[141] In this spirit, the longest memory of the European past is summons, because there the possibility of the future is disclosed in its primordial fullness, and because there, where causality cedes to destiny, being commences anew. As *Grécistes* emphasize, every great revolution envisages its project as a return to origins.[142]

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138. Alain de Benoist, "Recours au paganisme," in *Dieu est-il morte en Occident?*, ed. by Danièle Masson (Paris: Eds. Guy Trédaniel, 1998). In a related vein, Michel Marmin points out that Yeats, Joyce, Synge, and other luminaries of the Celtic Twilight — arguably the greatest of all identitarian movements — attempted no return to Eden or recourse to provincialism. Joyce, for example, "in replenishing Irish roots. . . sought to nurture such thick and prodigious forests in Ireland that their shadows would be cast upon the whole world." See "Les pièges de folklore," in *La cause des peuples*, *op. cit.* See also Philip O'Leary, *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921: Ideology and Innovation* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

139. Alain de Benoist, *Horizon 2000: Trois entretiens* (Paris: GRECE Pamphlet, 1996), p. 15; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, *op. cit.*, p. 39; *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, §5.

140. "Whoever wants to go very far back. . . into the first beginning — must think ahead to and carry out a great future." Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, § 23.

141. Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, tr. by G. E. Aylesworth (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 17. Cf. also Russell Kirk, "The Question of Tradition" (1989), in *The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right*, ed. by Joseph Scotchie (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999).

142. Maistra, *Renaissance de l'Occident?* (Paris: Plon, 1979), p. 295. The GRECE's recent qualified support of multiculturalism (see *éléments* 91 [March 1998]) would seem to render this conclusion purely rhetorical. Yet, if *Grécistes* have begun to imbibe the universalism of the dominant ideology and to retreat from the political implications of their historical philosophy, opposed in principle to any Balkanization of the lands their forefathers settled, archeofuturism has nonetheless become part of the intellectual arsenal of other, more steadfast Europeanists. Guillaume Faye, for one, continues to uphold it, and in several recent books has applied it to many of the most grievous European problems, doing so in ways that have renewed and radicalized it.

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A Sensitized World Order

Paul Gottfried

In *Promised Land, Crusader State*, Walter A. McDougall traces the stages in the evolution of American foreign policy from the country's founding. Focusing on two biblical images, the Hebraic notion, picked up from the Puritans, of a godly society removed from a world of sinners, and a militarized Christian mission to convert the heathens, if necessary by the sword, McDougall shows how the second image has come to replace the first for American international relations.[1] The most recent phase of these relations is "global meliorism," a tendency McDougall finds to be ascending since the 1960s. It is vividly exemplified by President Lyndon B. Johnson's comments about extending domestic wars against poverty to other societies far away. McDougall cites as an illustration of this melioristic aim a speech given by Johnson at Johns Hopkins University on April 7, 1965, calling for "a greatly expanded co-operative effort" to bring American-style prosperity to Indochina: "We dream of a world where all are fed and charged with hope. And we shall make it so."[2]

McDougall is right to distinguish such a view of American foreign relations from the "liberal internationalism" once associated with Woodrow Wilson and FDR. For these earlier internationalists, the goal of foreign policy was international cooperation, to be achieved under Anglo-American auspices, and occasional support for the principle of national self-determination. But liberal internationalists did not hope to make the world over to suit American tastes; and the ideals they invoked, as noted

1. Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), especially pp. 172-99.

2. Quoted in Thomas G. Paterson, ed., *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy*, Vol. 2, (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1989), pp. 572-73.

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by McDougall, could be articulated on the eve of US entry into WWII by non-interventionists as well as by fervent Anglophiles.[3] More importantly, these ideals were not sufficient for the polarized world of the Cold War or for a struggle that lasted as long as that war did. With the future of the globe hanging in the balance, it may have been inevitable that the US should present its own side as the only alternative model to the Communist example — a tendency already prefigured in the earlier struggle waged against Nazism and fascism. Moreover, as the US expanded its welfare state, amid expressions of self-congratulations, it became common to interpret this political appendage as basic to the American way of life. By 1966, McDougall observes, South Vietnam received 44% of USAID's entire budget. Though this funding often disappeared into a black hole, it was considered necessary to build Vietnamese prosperity as a precondition for an anti-Communist Vietnamese democracy. The American practice of throwing federal money at domestic problems was being applied to international trouble spots as well.[4]

While this analysis is both useful and accurate, it omits mention of another pressure leading to global meliorism: the dynamics and ideology of the American managerial state. In a defense of the Vietnamese war made by Johnson in 1966, Americans were told that "our foreign policy must always be an extension of our domestic policy. Our safest guide to what we do abroad is always what we do at home." Thus our military involvement in Southeast Asia "had its origin in the same presidential impulse that gave rise to the Great Society."[5]

This speech is paradigmatic for a view of American foreign policy that continues to be dominant. This view already existed embryonically in the 1960s, but by the 1970s, during the Nixon-Kissinger era, foreign policy considerations shifted from geopolitical interest to the propagation of "American values." In the 1980s, the notion of global democracy came to dominate Cold War strategy, as welfare-state anti-Communism became a defining mark of the struggle against Soviet imperialism. The National Endowment for Democracy and Reagan's security advisor Elliot Abrams typified the new course in combatting the Communist enemy, now viewed as anti-Semitic, opposed to the

3. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-51.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-95. On the often questionable costs of foreign aid, see Nicholas Eberstadt, *Foreign Aid and American Purpose* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1988).

5. Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 553.

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international labor movement, and essentially "anti-democratic."[6] The same set of ideas was also turned against the authoritarian Right, as the US backed the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and to the overthrow of Augusto Pinochet in Chile. This flowering of internationalist idealism had support from across the American political spectrum. What divided the Left and the Right was only the question of whether the US government was to get tough with the Communists as well as with the authoritarian Right. Neither American faction fussed over distinctions between internal and external politics; both approached foreign relations in the context of a massive proselytizing enterprise.[7]

Whereas the meliorism pushed by Lyndon Johnson consisted for the most part of bringing the Great Society to Indochina, by the end of the century, as NATO forces bombed Serbia, President Clinton announced to a G8 Summit in Bonn that "the new millennium" required a world "without ethnic hate." In an address to the Humanitarian Relief Organization on April 14, 1999, Clinton again justified military action against Serbia for driving Albanians out of Kosovo as an assault on bigotry. The "common future" was "threatened by the oldest problem of human society, our tendency to fear and dehumanize people who are different from ourselves."[8] Prime Minister Blair hailed this military operation as a blow against the obsolete notion of national sovereignty and helped organize a Commission for Democratic Education that would operate in conjunction with NATO.[9] Headed by a director and deputy director sympathetic to feminist and expressive freedoms, this commission would function as a disseminator of pro-diversity attitudes, understood both in the ethnic and social senses. A similar mission is being tackled by the Canadian foreign ministry, partly in cooperation with the Organization of American States, throughout the Western Hemisphere. Sending authorized military and civilian personnel to instruct Third World Hispanic and Amerindian populations in feminist values and practices and in the proper organization of family relations,

6. See *The Washington Post* (October 8, 1991), pp. A1 and A5; *The Wall Street Journal* (October 9, 1991), p. A14.

7. This convergence of Right and Left in the framework of an American missionary enterprise is the subject of Claes G. Ryn, *The New Jacobinism* (Washington: National Humanities Institute, 1991) and of Christopher Lasch, "The Obsolescence of Left and Right" in *New Oxford Review* 56 (April 1989), pp. 6-15.

8. Internet Department of State document (April 16, 1999).

9. Transcript taken from the Internet: *www.fco.gov.uk/newstext.asp2703* and *www.fco.gov.uk/news/text.asp2506*; see also remarks by Defense Secretary George Robertson (June 23, 1999), *www.mod.uk/news.prs267*.

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Canadian government publications now identify these efforts with the spreading of diversity. In a highly instructive interview, held on March 31, 1999, President Clinton responded to a query by CBS commentator Dan Rather concerning his "pent-up feelings" about having to send young people into "the valley of the shadow of death." "I do have pent-up feelings and I think the President is supposed to keep a lot of feelings pent-up. But let me say I think throughout human history one of the things that has most bedeviled human beings is their inability to get along with people that are different than they are, and their vulnerability to be led by demagogues who play on their fear of people who are different than they are."[10]

This new internationalism, as suggested by Clinton and Blair, aims at nothing less than a transformation of human consciousness. In this respect it is light years away from that liberal internationalism that gained vogue in the first half of the 20th century. In its visionary scope, the new meliorism goes beyond material tinkering in far off places, such as Johnson's attempt to export the Great Society. What the current project seeks to do is to overcome history as the cumulative record of prejudice, by extending the domestic revolution in sensitivity to other parts of the globe. Calling this neo-Wilsonianism misses its radical nature. Thus, when Charles Gati, Flora Lewis, Morton Kondracke, and Ben Wattenberg wrote passionately in favor of American intensive involvement in reconstructing post-Communist East Central Europe in the early 1990s, they mistakenly identified their plan as Wilsonian.[11] Their consuming interest in "exporting American democratic values" to an area supposedly grappling with an authoritarian past has a far more contemporary origin. Neither Wilson nor FDR had proposed that the US commit itself to "moralizing" societies with whom Americans were not at war.

While Wilsonians and the current meliorists have both been in favor of the US playing world police, the second are ideologically more intrusive. They also generally favor post-national units of political control, like the European Community, and insist that these instruments be used to advance fashionable social agendas, such as promoting gay rights internationally. The enforcement of the gay agenda among EC members has been going on since the mid-1990s, in the framework of advancing "human rights." Thus, recently the EC commanded the British armed forces to create a

10. Internet Department of State document (March 3, 1999).

11. Cf. Flora Lewis, "Postcommunist Blues," in *The New York Times* (September 22, 1990); Morton Kondracke, "The Democracy Gang," in *The New Republic* (November 6, 1989); and Charles Gati, "From Sarajevo to Sarajevo," in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall, 1992), p. 64.

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more welcoming environment for gays, on the grounds that they had been heretofore excluded from some aspects of British military life.[12]

In the last year, this value-imposition has taken another form in the US and in the EC, treating those who are perceived to be outside the prescribed value-consensus as a "threat" to international peace. The angry responses by EC-officials, such as Romano Prodi, and various Western political dignitaries to the granting of a minor cabinet-level post in the Austrian government to Jörg Haider included references to a new international threat. American security advisor Sandy Berger warned that his country would not sit idly by in the face of what was going on in Austria.[13] Throughout February 2000, there were many other warnings by, among others, the US President and Secretary of State, the Italian, French, and Belgian premiers, and the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. In all of them references were made to Haider as a global danger, for opposing immigration into his country, recalling Hitler's "successful employment policy" and opining that "decent people" could be found among the Waffen SS.[14] The upshot of the warnings issued by various heads of state was summed up by the director of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, which had been set up in Vienna to report on the alleged assault on democracy there. Director Beate Winkler expressed anguish that "Europe is going through a dangerous phase. There is an increased move away from centrist positions, and rightwing, even far right positions are losing their taboo." Then, to underline the danger of the present drift, Winkler brought up the specter of the past: "It starts with discrimination, then comes exclusion, and it can go as far as the Holocaust."[15]

Despite Haider's subsequent departure from the Austrian government, after partially apologizing for his *faux pas*, neither the EC nor the offended Western political figures thought the "crisis" was over. Measures to quarantine Austria economically and diplomatically remained in force through the spring of 2000, as long as EC leaders continued to fear that democracy was endangered.[16] Meanwhile, to avoid other "anti-democratic" threats, German Chancellor Schröder sent warnings to the Italian government that

12. *The New York Times*, (January 24, 2000), p. A16.

13. Quoted in *Il Corriere della Sera* (February 7, 2000); *The New York Times* (February 5, 2000), p. A15.

14. *The New York Times* (February 5, 2000), p. A27; Roger Cohen, "A Haider in their Future," in *The New York Times Magazine* (April 30, 2000), p. 54.

15. *Europa* 391 (November 1999), p. 24.

16. See The *Wall Street Journal* (March 1, 2000), p. A23; and *The New York Times* (February 29, 2000), p. A3.

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grave repercussions would follow if right-of-center politician Gianfranco Fini were allowed back into a national cabinet. For those who follow such arcane matters, it might be mentioned that Fini's *Alleanza Nazionale* had incorporated, among other ailing factions, the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, a predominantly Southern Italian neo-fascist, pro-American party (subsidized by the CIA) that had crested by the late 1950s.[17]

Weekly Standard editors William Kristol and Robert Kagan provided a counterfactual picture of international relations when, in *Foreign Affairs* (1996) they set out to defend a "neo-Reaganite perspective." From the authors' pleas for a foreign policy to accompany "the remoralization of America at home" and admonitions about the "relativistic multiculturalism" being practiced by American diplomats, it would seem that American foreign affairs are being conducted by raving nihilists. Allegedly reflecting this cynicism is an unwillingness to "recognize that the principles of the Declaration of Independence are not merely the choices of a particular culture but are universal, enduring, self-evident truths." Some conservatives had drifted into the prevalent cynicism by embracing "the pinched nationalism of [Pat] Buchanan's 'America First,' where the appeal to narrow self-interest masks a deeper form of self-loathing."[18] The references to the hidden motives of American neo-isolationists and the insistence that the Declaration of Independence properly read mandates an activist and even missionizing foreign policy are both open to question. Even more so is the underlying assumption that the current American foreign policy has been divorced from moral concerns.

The opposite seems to be the case. The UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva features almost daily orations and policy statements, many given by American and British leaders, on what must be done to combat "xenophobia" and "ethnic hate" internationally.[19] In February and March 2000 Western political celebrities weighed in against the "fascist" danger in Austria, competing with each other to find a sufficiently grim punishment for Austrians, whether or not they voted for Haider. Secretary of State Albright dug her fingers in deeper by scolding the Austrians for

17. See Charles Vaugeois, "Histoire et mutation du néofascisme italien," in *Enquête sur l'histoire* (August 27, 1998), pp. 13-22; and Marco Tarchi, *Dal MSI ad AN* (Bologna: Mulino, 1997).

18. "Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy," in *Foreign Affairs* (July/August, 1996), p. 33.

19. See the proceeding of the 54th session of the UNC of HR, ed. by Michael J. Dennis, in *American Journal of International Law* (January, 2000), p. 94.

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"not making peace with their past."[20] All of this came less than a year after the bombing of Belgrade and Pristina, presented as the punishment for ethnic hate taking the form of ethnic cleansing. In short, there is no evidence that, under the impact of multicultural professors, Americans are pursuing amoral international relations. The problem is not a drift into relativism, but, rather, according to Henry Kissinger, a plunge into theocratic politics in a new key. Western states are lapsing into liturgical formulas each time they try to talk about politics.[21]

Equally apparent is the critical observation by the Canadian journalist Eric Margolis that the current moralizing about historical sins is always directed against the Right: "Italy's prime minister Massimo D'Alema has been Haider's most vocal European critic. What *chutzpah*! D'Alema is a 'modern' Communist. His Communist party is part of Italy's growing coalition. Communists, let's recall, murdered 100 million civilians last century, Hitler 12 million. According to the Euro double standard, reformed Communists are dandy, but anyone to the right of the moderate left must be an extremist or a Nazi."[22] Margolis's insight is entirely correct (save for the designation of Socialist D'Alema as a member of the Italian Communist Party). Euro-Communists and their Socialist allies have been relentless in calling for action against politically incorrect figures and statements, while ignoring the beams in their own eyes. This strategy, adopted in the wake of the Soviet collapse, may be intended to deflect attention from the evidence of Communist brutality and the craven cover-ups provided by Western Communist parties. It is also an attempt by Socialist leaders to truckle to Communist coalition-partners, by turning public anger against exaggerated anti-establishment dangers on the Right.

The present double standard fits into an apparently irremovable fixation of Western intellectual elites; an anachronistic, but steadily adapted confrontational setting between the Right and the Left. Presumably, this *mise en scene* dates back to Europe in the 1930s. Hence, the endless reenactments of what Ernst Nolte calls "the European civil war"[23] that once

20. *The New York Times* (February 5, 2000), p. A1; and *The New Republic* (February 21, 2000).

21. Syndicated in *The New York Post* (August 17, 1999).

22. *The Toronto Sun* (February 6, 2000), Editorial Page. Another view on the commotion unleashed against Austria by the EU concerns the attempt of EU President Romano Prodi to divert attention from his executive failures by creating or at least exacerbating confrontations. See *L'Express* (April 13, 2000), pp. 24-25.

23. See Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg, 1917-1945: Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus* (Frankfurt a/M and Berlin: Fischer Verlag, 1997), pp. 46-106.

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took place between Communists and fascists and their respective devotees. Warnings are sounded stressing the obsoleteness of this frame of reference, as when two moderately left-of-center journalists, Tony Judt and Jacob Weisberg, suggested that the attacks on Haider evoked the wrong historical parallels. We are no longer living in the 1930s; while Haider, moreover, has made reckless statements in reaching out to an older generation, he is essentially a critic of sclerotic socialist bureaucracy; finally, Austria in 2000 is not the same depression-wracked, broken society that welcomed Hitler's occupying armies in 1938.[24]

Obsessing about right-wing extremism takes the form of returning to Hitler each time Western governments impose sanctions or go to war against "human rights" violators, be it Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic. One mocking journalist has suggested creating a "Hitler of the Month Club" to which international malefactors are now routinely consigned.[25] Essential to this demonization is the appearance of Elie Wiesel on news programs for the purpose of comparing some breaking international crisis to Hitler's Final Solution.[26] Although these lamentations may appeal to those already converted, there is the snag of Wiesel's contradicting himself when he asserts that Nazi crimes were "uniquely" evil. On March 24, 1999, in a televised address to the American people explaining the war against Serbia, President Clinton furnished his own gloss on modern history: "Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia, is where WWI began. WWII and the Holocaust engulfed this region. In both wars Europe was slow to recognize the dangers and the US waited even longer to enter the conflict."[27]

Although neither Clinton nor most of his listeners may know what really occurred in the Balkans in 1914 or in the early 1940s, it may be useful to underline the fanciful nature of this appeal to History. WWI broke out because the major powers did not resist plunging into a Balkan crisis; it is doubtful that US entanglement in that crisis would have led to peace instead of widening the conflict. As for the Holocaust that took place in the Balkans, it was not the Serbs, but the Bosnian and Albanian Muslims who worked for the Nazis in rounding up and killing Jews and

24. Jacob Weisberg, "The EU, Not Haider Threatens Austrian Democracy," in *The Wall Street Journal* (February 4, 2000), p. 15A; Tony Judt, "Tale from Vienna Woods," in *The New York Review of Books* (March 23, 2000), pp. 8-10.

25. See George Szamuely's commentaries for the *New York Press*. See also Barbara Amiel, "Fear and Loathing in Austria," in The *National Post* (February 16, 2000).

26. Eli Wiesel, "The Question of Genocide," in *Newsweek* (April 12, 1999), p. 37.

27. For the full text, see *The New York Times* (March 25, 1999), A15.

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Serbs. It testifies to the power of the Holocaust as a malleable symbol and to general historical ignorance that it could be applied to a situation so thoroughly unlike the one that had befallen Serbia in 1941.

Illustrative of the kind of blame game that centers on historical burdens and symbols is the loud disagreement now heard in the Italian Senate over a national "day of remembrance" for the Holocaust. While the Center-Left (which now prominently includes the Communists in Western Europe) pushed through the House of Deputies on January 27 a remembrance of "Nazi-fascist" atrocities, the bill nonetheless has been stalled in the Senate. The Center-Right insists on a modification that would extend the official remembrance to "all victims of political tyranny," and the Center-Left and its journalistic sympathizers have responded by attacking this as a subterfuge.[28] Supposedly, the Right is trying to "refocus responsibility for not hesitating to pass the anti-Semitic legislation of 1938 that deprived Jews [in fascist Italy] of public positions and then, for collaborating in the deportation of Italian Jews." Hence, the desperate efforts to divert attention from the rightist *male oscuro* of anti-Semitism by bringing up the already half-forgotten crimes of non-Western Communists. An unabashedly partisan columnist, Clelia Piperno, explains the matter as follows: Unlike alleged Communist crimes, anti-Semitism must remain a pressing daily concern. Given the presence of Holocaust-deniers and the furtive painting of Swastikas on buildings, it must be assumed that "anti-Semitism is a plant that seems to have infinite roots and with which humanity will have to grapple forever."[29]

Presumably, Communists and Socialists will explain how to come to terms with this *male oscuro* by banning inappropriate communications, as they have already begun to do in Italy, and by decrying the notice taken of Communist mass murder as a tactic of fascist self-defense. The most astonishing part of this brief, however, is the implied identification of the Polo coalition (headed by Italian TV magnate Silvio Berlusconi) with Fascist Party deputies who voted for the Jewish-exclusion act of 1938. Almost equally misleading is the confounding of those fascist deputies with the government of the Saló Republic, formed more than 5 years later. Although there were participants, starting with Mussolini, active in both, the two governments were quite distinct, the latter having been set up as a Nazi

28. *Il Mattino* (April 17, 2000), p. 17.

29. *Ibid.*; for a sympathetic, but penetrating criticism of "the blame the Christian West" syndrome among progressive intellectuals, see Jacques Ellul, *The Betrayal of the West,* tr. by Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Seabury Press,1978).

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puppet state after the Allied invasion of Italy. Both Italian Black Brigades and the Nazi SS were the ones directly responsible for the deportation of Italian Jews in 1944. This was a moral crime, but one that had nothing to do with the present members of the Polo coalition. One might wonder why this fictive connection continues to be made without drawing widespread critical attention.[30]

Those who engage in this practice are not, for the most part, Marxists or Marxist-Leninists. One would be hard put to demonstrate that Jospin, Prodi, Schröder or any other vocal anti-fascist embraces dialectical materialism or is about to nationalize key industries in his country. It is not Communism, but anti-anti-Communism that drives many of those who feign ignorance of Communist mass murder. In the 1980s, Jean-François Revel, a former Communist, pointed out that to be against Communism means being "anti-progressive" and therefore being cheek by jowl with right-wing extremists.[31] When Angela Davis spoke at Harvard University in December 1991 and deplored the downfall of East European Communist regimes, she received a standing ovation from a crowd of more than 500 professors and students. (200 other members of the Harvard community watched Davis' performance over closed-circuit television.) It is unlikely that this approval, apparently shared by the *Harvard Crimson*, was expressed for the decrepit tyrannies that had recently fallen and which, in many cases, had bestowed awards on the speaker.[32] The thunderous applause was more likely being bestowed on the anti-fascist cause Davis presumes to speak for and which her well-wishers identify with a feminist, black, socialist revolutionary. She and her side are imagined as being locked in combat with international fascism.

Furthermore, the unconquered fascist past has a remarkably fluid content. It keeps taking the shape of whatever is deemed politically incorrect, be it restrictions on immigration, customary gender distinctions, or making a fuss about a European national heritage. While reasonable people may disagree about the merits of any or all of these positions, it is a bit of

30. Neither side in this debate mentions the indiscriminate slaying by anti-fascist vigilantes in 1944 and 1945 of more than 100,000 Italians considered to be fascist sympathizers. See Paul Serant, *Les vaincus et la libération* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1964); and Silvio Bertoldi, "Roma liberata: Giustizia alla italiana," in *Corriere della Sera* (November 25, 1996), p. 19.

31. Jean–François Revel, *Comment les démocraties finissent* (Paris: Grasset, 1983), especially pp. 243-392.

32. See the feature story in *Harvard Crimson* (December 13, 1991), and the impassioned account of Davis' visit to Harvard in *Peninsula* (February, 1992).

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a stretch from there to generic fascism or to its gruesome Hitlerian subtype. But that stretch is negotiable as soon as one appeals to a hypothetical regression, i.e., to the idea that one slippery slope leads to an even more perilous one. Presumaby, if one accepts indelicate social premises one opens oneself and others up to a desensitization process that might culminate in Haiderism or even worse. After all, Haiderism, like Hitlerism, is about excluding the other and appealing to national solidarity, and as soon as one allows such drawing of distinctions into public discussion, all hell might break loose, particularly since the prejudice in question is said to suffuse the Western subconscious.

A question that arises here is to what extent the new internationalism is to be applied to non-Western societies. Are non-Westerners fit targets for the behavioral policies that Western governments are now imposing on their own willing subjects? Allegedly, there are historical circumstances that make these policies particularly applicable to the Western white Christian populations on which they are now being tested. If these groups and their ancestors have been associated with the system of oppression delineated by liberal Christians, designated minorities, and the media, they would seem to be the ones most in need of reconstruction. Defenders of multiculturalism have also argued that the "identities" granted to Western victims are necessary for their moral validation. Women, blacks, and Amerindians, in the view of Charles Taylor, have had to fashion for themselves "positive identities" as part of the "politics of recognition" and to overcome the "negative, devaluing identity" thrust upon them by others.[33] This selective identitarian politics is also isomorphic with the kind practiced by the managerial state at home. Viewed through the prism of state-sponsored diversity, the claim of Southern whites to a unique cultural identity does not earn the same respect as black or Hispanic efforts at consciousness-raising. Indeed, the Southern white claim to identity is treated as a stubborn indisposition to atone for the past, while the black or Hispanic one is something forced by the federal government on institutions of learning.

Other considerations would seem to necessitate a mission to the Third World on behalf of groups who rate as historic victims in the West. As René Girard has observed, the "*victimophilie*" that increasingly pervades Western Christianity is still, like Christianity itself, universalist in

33. Charles Taylor, *The Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 10.

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scope.[34] It must therefore dawn on Western Christian victimologists that many of their "suffering just" are at least as victimized outside of the Western world as within it. The sneering comments that Anglo-American prelates made about their conservative counterparts in Asia and Africa at the Lambeth Anglican conference in the summer of 1999 may portend even stormier encounters between liberal and non-Western Christians. Although, in the Balkans, Western leaders and journalists took the side of Muslims against Christians, by the fall of 1999 a new political spirit was evident. National newspapers in the US and England were calling for action, and not ruling out military force, to impose gender equality on Muslim Afghanistan.[35] The two positions are not necessarily at odds: if sides must be taken between Christians and Muslims, the new internationalism will rally to the Muslims, everything being equal, as it is not when Russian power becomes a factor, as it does in Muslim Chechnya. On the other hand, when the conflict is between the demands of feminists and a non-Western patriarchal religion, it is clear who trumps whom. It is also clear which side exercises more influence in Western countries.

Finally, the politics of recognition is no more than what its name signifies, i.e., the reduction of identity to a political tool that elites may wield as they see fit. The increasingly tortured efforts to define group identity among multiculturalists always come back to the need to validate what is arbitrary. This arbitrariness operates in two ways. Identity, for Richard Rorty and Charles Taylor, is a subjective choice, which may help provide a cultural dimension or be an ideological stance[36] (The two are not mutually exclusive). It is not a condition that defines the subject, but something that the subject may assume for a particular reason at a particular point.[37] Presumably, identity is a condition that one may slough off as one's position

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34. René Girard, *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair* (Paris: Grasset, 1999); and the interview with Girard conducted by Stéphen de Petiville in *Catholica* 67 (Spring 2000), pp. 10-15.

35. *The Christian Science Monitor* (May 3, 2000), p. 11; *The New York Times* (May 3, 2000), p. A4; *ibid.* (April 26, 2000), p. 38.

36. See Taylor, *The Politics of Recognition*, *op. cit.* ; and Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), particularly pp. 44-69.

37. *Ibid.* Although the changing self-definition of identity is essential for Rorty's liberal heritage, the Right he propounds to engage in subjective discourse is trumped by the obligation to "diminish" cruelty. In *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in the 20th Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 81-82, Rorty states that "what mocking neoconservatives call politically correct is necessary to help people who have been humiliated."

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in life changes — or as one ceases to feel victimized.

Identity as recognition, however, is something that must be granted, which means (and here the multiculturists are politically right) by those in power or by those who intend to seize it. The predicate does not have an ontological status that adheres to it, as in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, or an evolutionary, but more or less fixed character, as in the anthropology of classical conservatism. As here understood, identity is neither about universal qualities of likeness or unlikeness nor about an acculturating process, family bonding, and shared genes. Rather, postmodernist identity has a relational and confrontational content and is contingent on being recognized by those who matter.[38] This last qualification is essential for understanding its connection to the managerial state and to that state's internationalist project. Identity can be extended or denied, depending on whether a group is beneficial to what that regime is undertaking to do. This remains the case even with an ideology of sensitivity to victims and of overcoming one's historical burdens. There are some victims the state may wish to help more than other ones or some burdens that seem more in need of overcoming. Such political choices may involve underscoring the culpability of the Western society now being overcome, but need not necessarily do so.

Finally, these choices do not have to target Westerners in trying to bring about cultural and mental changes. In advertising the largest meeting ever of the OAS, scheduled to convene in Windsor in Spring, 2000, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs expressed its commitment to making the gathering "more inclusive, conducted in a spirit of international transparency and openness."[39] But, while this apparent statement of good will was framed in multicultural cliché, it also revealed a starkly imperialist intention. The Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs gave as "Canada's goal" for sponsoring OAS activities the promotion of "the Inter-American Children's Institute, the Inter-American Commission of Women, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights." Every one of these organizations the CD of FA designates as integral to "the

38. This point is made by Giovanni Di Cristofaro Longo in *Identità e Cultura: Per un'Antropologia della Reciprocità* (Rome: Studium, 1993), especially pp. 32-36. Di Cristofaro Longo accentuates the indistinguishability of culture and identity in the formulation of a postmodenist concept of reality, i.e., the function of culture as a reference point or ideology in the individual's self-definition. The problem is whose culture viewed as identity is to be raised to a public ideology; given the fact that, by definition, there can be no postmodernist political principle freed of its necessarily subjective character.

39. *Canada Worldview* 7 (Spring 2000), p. 10.

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family of Inter-American institutions" operates explicitly to change social patterns in traditional non-Western societies. Whether or not one supports these groups, Third-World critics who present them and UN agencies involved in reconditioning populations as instruments of Western imperialism are correct.[40] These advocates of behavior modification point to the fact that the extending of Western domestic politics to the international scene is now reaching out beyond a Western base.

Despite the rejection of traditional Western identities inherent in this new mission, it is nonetheless attached to a geographically as well as socially expanding form of control. This situation of an imperial mission with a changing moral and cultural content is not something unprecedented. It was illustrated equally well by the transformation of the Roman Empire from a pagan to a Christian *imperium*. By the end of the 4th century, the Roman mission was no longer the *renovatio antiquitatis* preached by Augustus and Virgil, but the creation of a *respublica christiana*. A Christianized Rome was charged by the Emperor Theodosius to eradicate paganism, including its own ancestral religious past.[41] In a less natural way, but one still relevant to our case, Persia went from being a Zoroastrian to a Muslim empire after being invaded by Arabs in 640 A.D. The new Muslim government suppressed the Zoroastrian practices of the Sasanian dynasty that had been overthrown. But, at the same time, the religiously changed Persia became the center of the Muslim Caliphate established in the 8th century in Iraq and Iran.[42] Imperial expansion does require a collective dedication to a particular enterprise, but not necessarily to the same one under whose auspices it had started. Nor does the managerial ascendancy, of which the US is the most powerful representative, require that the same ideology be associated with all phases of managerial governance. As long as its subjects remain submissive to those in authority, power can be exercised in the name of more than one ideal or vision.

In the case of mass democracy in the managerial state, the legitimating ideology has moved from advancing "scientific" management of public affairs and providing widespread access to material benefits to the raising up of designated victims and to the sensitization of everyone else. Support for the last two ideals does not exclude any and all appeal to the earlier

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40. *Ibid.*; see Noam Chomsky, "Brave New World Order," in *New Statesman and Society* (December 20, 1991), p. 19.

41. John Bury, *History of the Late Roman Empire*, Vol. I (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1958).

42. Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East: A Brief History of the Last 2,000 Years* (New York: Scribner, 1995), pp. 51-86.

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ones. Managerial regimes and their defenders have been quick to take credit for material improvements, e.g., the rise of GNP and life expectancy in the US, despite the fact that government redistributionist plans have not contributed significantly to the improvements in question. It is the impact of material and technological advances, minus the kind of destructively grasping state common to the Third World, as pointed out by Peter Bauer, which accounts for growing Western affluence.[43] The prosperity being observed is the latest phase of a process that has gone on for several centuries. It is not, as the US media often seems to be suggesting, a product of the social concern of the current American administration.[44]

The new internationalism has not overshadowed the older form completely, and it is therefore possible to encounter arguments among Western political leaders in favor of US-promoted free trade or the rule of law. Nonetheless, the view advanced by Samuel Huntington about a "clash of civilizations," between a constitutionally structured, capitalist West and non-Western rivals overlooks scales of size. Vast military and economic disparities exist between those associated with the US and other "civilizations," such as the resurgent Islamic world. Material rivalries and cultural antagonisms do not necessarily bespeak the operation of well-matched sides. Equally problematic, Huntington pays too little attention to the changes affecting American political culture.[45] He creates the impression that the US is pretty much the same politically and morally as it was in the early 20th century. He conveys little awareness of the specifically managerial kind of regime that has helped shape the American and European present. This government has taken the place of a bourgeois liberal polity and is imposing on other parts of the world its own sensitizing ideology.

A final characteristic of the global meliorism that has evolved in the US and its imitators is the breaking down of distinctions between national and international. Movements of the Right in the US that stress this difference have increasingly limited appeal. This is not for the reason given by unfriendly critics of Pat Buchanan, that Americans are too generous to embrace "pinched" nationalist opinions. What has happened is that the US has come to define its national character in multinational and even multicultural terms. The reconstituted (neoconservative) Right and Center

43. Peter Bauer, *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981.)

44. See, for example, Sean Wilentz, "Yawn," in *The New Republic* (February 28, 2000); and "Give it a Rest," *ibid.* (March 6, 2000), p. 8.

45. See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 183-291.

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Left both accept a globalist formulation of American identity, and each favors the present immigration policy (in force since the mid-1960s), by which over a million immigrants, mostly from the Third World, arrive in the US legally each year.[46] The fact that US GNP has more than doubled since the 1960s, while unemployment rates are now at about 4 to 5 percent, argues Peter Schuck, has had a weakening effect on the anti-immigration movement.[47] By 2000, opposition to the present high level of Third World immigration had dwindled to 45 percent, having fallen by 34 percent from where it had been in the mid-1990s. While Peter Brimelow is correct that US economic growth over the last few decades could have been sustained with minimal immigration, that this influx has in fact hurt the underclass and impeded minority assimilation, none of these objections may be historically relevant any longer.[48] The fact that the immigration took place during a period of growth has undercut its saliency as a political issue. It has also allowed the managerial-media elite to present its multicultural initiatives as the price of material growth.

The image of an American nation being pushed into risky entanglements by foreign powers is an American conservative nationalist illusion. It was the American government that created UN cover to launch military action against Iraq in 1991 and did the same with NATO when it prepared to go to war against Serbia in 1999. By 1999, however, US management had been refined. When, on March 25, President Clinton delivered a speech comparing Serbian ethnic cleansing to Nazi genocide, President Chirac, Prime Minister Blair, *Le Monde*, *Nouvel Observateur* and other parts of the French national press reached immediately for the same tropes and parallel.[49] As French social commentator Régis Debray has speculated, the timing was such as to make it hard to rule out the likelihood of direct influence. But, Debray also notes that the impact and increasing homogeneity of the Western media leave open the possibility

46. For analyses of this globalist view of American identity shared by the Center-Right and Center-Left, see Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of American Conservatism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88), p. 3-29; and John Lukacs, "The Stirrings of History," in *Harper's* 281 (August 1990), pp. 47-49.

47. Peter Schuck, "Emigration and Immigration," in *The New Republic* (April 13, 1998), p. 16; "Dual Nationality," in *The Wall Street Journal* (March 18, 1998), p. A22.

48. Peter Brimelow, *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster* (New York: Random House, 1995); and George Borjas, *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy* (Princeton, N.J; Princeton University Press, 1999).

49. Cf. *Le Monde* (March 25, 1999), which cites references to "genocide" by Clinton, Blair and Chirac; see also the series on Kosovo in *Nouvel Observateur* (May 13-19,1999) and the editorial by Serge July in *Libération* (April 21, 1999).

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that Western leaders on two continents were being edged simultaneously toward the same thinking and outcome.[50]

Conservative nationalists also exaggerate the extent of popular opposition in the US to political actions they disapprove of. Whether one is speaking about government-support for black and Latino ethnic expressiveness, the costs of illegal immigration, or the inevitability that white Americans will become a minority if present immigration policies are continued, the trends and political actions deplored by the old Right have certainly not become national wedge-issues. Such matters are correlated to problems that have surfaced in particular places, in Southwestern border areas or in Utah, for example, where the drug trade has fallen into the hands of illegal immigrants.[51] On the other hand, nothing connected to American nationalist politics resonates as strongly as the concern registered in polls about "fighting discrimination in the workplace." Not even quotas and affirmative action in education, issues that engage the entire American Right, have aroused a national opposition as noticeable as that counterpoised on the other side. Even granting other variables, the US President who has done most to identify himself with multiculturalism enjoys job-approval ratings of over 60 percent. The continuing inability of the anti-diversity side to make a fight of it should indicate why therapeutic socialization continues to make inroads at home and abroad. Contrary to what is believed by its opponents, it has simply not awakened any major resistance.

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50. Cf. Régis Debray, *Introduction à la médiologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000).

51. Representative of monitory books trying to sway American public opinion on the economic and social costs of immigration is Edward N. Luttwak's *The Endangered American Dream* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

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Authenticity and Impersonality in Adorno's Aesthetics

Susan Hahn

The Impossibility of Poetry

Adorno's aesthetic theory bears the profound scars of his personal experience of fascism. Even after Auschwitz, he feared that modern bourgeois society is a breeding ground for new forms of fascist terror. It was said that, after Auschwitz, one could no longer write poems. But Adorno insisted that postwar art is an indispensable means for telling the truth about how the social order was fundamentally changed by that catastrophe.[1] Not to tell the truth is to be guilty of complicitous silence; yet, the unbearable truth is that society is pervasively and radically evil. As long as unresolved antagonisms still encourage authoritarian elements, Adorno insisted that post-war art must not affirm society or provide an imaginary resolution of its contradictions that real life denies.[2]

It has become commonplace to read Adorno as privileging only negative artforms. His exemplary art is negative art, which polemicizes against the perniciousness of the established social order by containing an analogue of the antagonisms in contemporary society. He attacks any utopian or "affirmative" artforms that try to reconcile people to this world or invite them to identify with it as "false" and "illusory," as an unjustified and guilty response to the horrors of existence. According to pessimistic interpretations

1. Theodor W. Adorno, "Meditations on Metaphysics: After Auschwitz," in *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), pp. 86-7; "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *ibid.*, p. 210; and *Negative Dialectics*, tr. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum Press, 1973), pp. 362-3.

2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, tr. by Christian Lenhardt (New York: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1984), p. 242. Cited hereafter as AT.

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of Jürgen Habermas, Raymond Geuss, Hans Robert Jauss and others,[3] for Adorno modern art must be thoroughly negative and critical of the social order, in order to make people aware of the dangers of instrumental rationality. Thus, an impossible dilemma would face all modern art today: either it lulls people into a false complacency, with comforting, but socially pernicious illusions about contemporary society, or it tells the unbearable truth about society and brings about the opposite of reconciliation.[4]

A number of criticisms follow from this dilemma: By overemphasizing the negativity of artworks, Adorno deprives modern art of one of its primary social functions: a communicative and reconciling function. He denounces theories of communicative rationality, which Habermas accords the highest value, because he thinks the indefinable content of artworks cannot be communicated directly, and thus is split off from rational, communicative practices. For all practical purposes, Adorno's concept of utopia is empty, since it can be characterized only negatively as the exact opposite of the actual world.[5] While he allows that negative artworks may contain a utopian promise, they conceal it "hermetically," in the form of "hints" and "flashes." By their very nature esoteric and indecipherable, such encoded artworks fail to communicate their utopian promise to all but a specially-trained elite. This is said to cause some embarrassment to this alleged *Marxist*-aesthete.[6]

3. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, tr. by Frederick Lawrence, Ch. V, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno," pp. 112-113; Raymond Geuss, "Art and Theodicy" in *Morality, Culture, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), "Art and Criticism in Adorno's Aesthetics," in *European Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (December, 1998), pp. 299, 300, 304-5; Hans Robert Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, Theory and History of Literature Series, Vol. 3 (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1982), p. 181.

4. For an account of this "impossible dilemma," see Raymond Geuss' review article of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, in *Journal of Philosophy* (December, 1986), p. 735. See also Richard Wolin's version of this "debilitating antimony" in "The De-aestheticization of Art: On Adorno's *Aesthetische Theorie*," in *Telos* 41 (Fall 1979).

5. Geuss, "Art and Criticism in Adorno's Aesthetics," *op. cit.*, p. 306.

6. What makes this embarrassing, Susan Buck-Morss points out, is that appreciation of the truth is open only to a cultural elite, whose economic security gives them the leisure time to acquire the highly specialized training necessary to understand modernist, avant-garde works. See her *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (New York: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 41-2. Wolin, also assuming that Adorno is a Marxist, raises the criticism that autonomous works, which are detached from the true collective, perpetuate the very conditions of unfreedom afflicting bourgeois society they were meant to protest against (Wolin, *op. cit.*, p. 107). But Adorno is trying to enforce an extreme separation between autonomous works and the blind collective. This break from mass culture can be accomplished only if avant-garde artworks resist the suggestion that they must be legitimated to prove their value. Artworks have a value *sui generis*, and are to be judged by internal standards, which may make them unintelligible to all except a few well-informed initiates.

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This reading fails to do justice to those passages in which Adorno allows room for affirmative artworks that provide a concrete experience of reconciliation. He rejects the *false* appearance of reconciliation that he finds in escapist fiction, Hollywood films, and the artificially soothing images of classical works of art. But he explicitly denies in his *Aesthetic Theory* that progress in art can be reduced to the common denominator of negativity, or that his categories of negation and affirmation should be taken as absolute in ordering the historical progress of art: "This does not mean, of course, that all positive and affirmative works of art — almost the entire store of traditional works — are to be swept away. . . Philosophical criticism of unreflected nominalism debars the simple claim that the course of progressive negativity. . . is the path of progress in art."[7] While negative, modernist works may be the historically necessary expression of the alienation of contemporary modern society, this is not a permanent state of affairs. He insists that "Art wants to be, *must be* squarely Utopian."[8] Since the negative content of artworks is not only in their timeless, static properties, but also in the forceful role they play in transforming consciousness, artforms that once proved to be critical and negative at their inception, may in the long run turn out to be artificially "positive." Even Arnold Schönberg's progressive twelve-tone technique, which Adorno praised for its critical content when it first appeared, later lost its critical edge and ceased to be negative through assimilation and acceptance.[9]

Adorno's philosophy of reconciliation provides a strong component of reconciliation missing in the pessimistic reading. The ambiguity in his concepts of affirmation and negativity may be due in part to his ambivalent relation to a long philosophical tradition, ranging from Schiller, Hegel and Schopenhauer up to Nietzsche, which claims that art ought to ameliorate suffering caused by living in a problematic world. There are residual aims and ambitions of that tradition in Adorno's remark that

7. AT, p. 228; cf. also pp. 264, 332, 347.

8. AT, p. 27: "While art is driven into a position of absolute negativity, it is never absolutely negative. . . it always has an affirmative residue." (AT, p. 332).

9. Richard Wagner's diminished seventh chord met the same fate. See Frederic Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 21. Adorno writes: " . . . almost no one gets excited anymore about that twelve-tone technique that is served up at all music festivals. It is tolerated as the private activity of specialists, a cultural necessity in some not quite clear fashion, entrusted wholly to the experts; no one is actually challenged, no one recognizes himself in it, or senses in it any binding claim to truth." See his "Aging of New Music," in *Telos* 77 (Fall 1988), p. 100.

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"Authentic works must wipe out any memory trace of reconciliation — but only in the interest of (true) reconciliation."[10] He straddles this tradition, one foot in, the other out, when he writes: "While firmly rejecting the *appearance* of reconciliation, art nonetheless holds fast to the *idea* of reconciliation in an antagonistic world." His ambivalence is further reflected in the contradictory idiom he uses to describe what he considers a genuine kind of reconciliation: an "unreconciled reconciliation," an "unconciliatory reconciliation."

The fact that one cannot speak of affirmative, utopian meanings in Adorno without referencing negative meanings should stand as a warning not to err too far in the direction of giving an overly optimistic reading. His aesthetics gives rise to quite divergent readings. Jameson, for instance, bases Adorno's notion of reconciliation on the possibility of experiencing a utopian state of perfect unity, in which suffering born of contradictions has been eliminated.[11] While Adorno may think through the problem of reconciliation in a genuinely Hegelian spirit, for Jameson to succeed he has to focus selectively on syntheses and unities in Adorno's aesthetic thought, and ignore his later negative dialectical method, which refuses to synthesize unities and harmonious totalities. Moreover, to downplay the negative tensions and contradictory elements, this optimistic reading has to dodge the real problem that Adorno thinks faces reconciliation today, i.e., how to write a Hegelian narrative of reconciliation in a post-war period, in which Auschwitz has ruled out the very conditions of its possibility.

Poetic Language and Conceptual Language

Adorno's project of reconciliation starts from a Nietzschean critique of conceptual language, according to which ordinary language, concept-formation, and conventional logic falsify ones unique, individual experiences. Concepts are degenerate, Nietzsche claims, because they have lost

10. AT, p. 333. Adorno also writes: "Autonomous art is not just an echo of suffering, it also tends to *diminish* the scope of suffering, the organon of its gravity being at the same time the means whereby it neutralizes suffering" (AT, p. 57).

11. Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1 "T. W. Adorno or, Historical Tropes," p. 8. See also *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic* (London and New York: Verso, 1990). Albrecht Wellmer also defends Adorno against the Habermasian criticism, namely, that Adorno failed to connect his theory of reconciliation to communicatively shared meanings in a world of rational subjects. See "Adorno, Modernity, and the Sublime," in *The Actuality of Adorno*, ed. by Max Pensky (New York: State University of New York, 1997), pp. 118, 120-123 and 126.

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their power to evoke original sensations and authentic experiences. To use rational concepts, abstractions, and generalities enforces a kind of conformity of thought, a homogenization which prevents it from taking original, individual turns. Accordingly, most individuals are deprived not only of the adequate concepts they need to articulate, interpret and reflect on original, irreducibly unique experiences, but also of those very experiences. At the heart of his Nietzschean critique of conceptual language is Adorno's fear that the impulse to use concepts is linked to an impulse for self-preservation — an impulse Adorno links to instrumental reason. This impulse to control nature by dominating it manifests itself further in the social sphere, as intimations of the fascist mentality; specifically, in the way the culture industry (the American variety of fascism) and the prevailing ideology pervert ordinary language and forms of thought in the interest of dominating and enforcing conformity in social relations.

Adorno's critique of irrational approaches to epistemology prevents him from following Nietzsche in according primacy to non-discursive, non-linguistic artforms, such as music over lyric poetry, as a means of revealing hidden truths behind the veil of illusions.[12] The strong Hegelian residue in Adorno leads him to resist equating the unsayable with the irrational, and to retain a link to discursive, conceptual thought. By this, he does not imply that artistic concepts can find their equivalent paraphrase in philosophical concepts, or ultimately can be superseded by a conceptual, discursive language, but, rather, that artworks depend on philosophical analysis and interpretation, at least of the kind he is giving, which is distanced from instrumental rationality, to say what they cannot communicate. As inadequate as conceptual language may be for producing equivalent translations, it is nevertheless indispensable for cracking the encrypted code of art that blocks the retrieval and decipherment of its truth content.[13]

12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, §6, tr. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). Nietzsche writes, "The poems of the lyrist can express nothing that did not already lie hidden in that vast universality and absoluteness in the music that compelled him to figurative speech. Language can never render the cosmic symbolism of music, because music stands in a symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore, symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena." Adorno inches closer to this view when he says: "the true language of art is nonverbal, its nonverbal moment has priority over the element of signification in literature, a moment that is also not completely absent from music" (AT, p. 164).

13. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought: Theodore W. Adorno* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 237. See AT, p. 107.

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In *Notes on Literature*, Adorno finds in linguistic artforms in particular the power to convey sensible experiences that are not filtered through falsifying concepts and conceptual schemes. Poetry, especially lyric poetry, enjoys a special status in Adorno's aesthetic theory, because it resists the repressive force of instrumental conceptual language. In this rather unfamiliar and arguably marginal genre of poetry, traditionally regarded as a vehicle for the most private, idiosyncratic, self-absorbed, and asocial expression,[14] he finds an alternative language, which quietly protests the falsifying forms of abstract language. It is typical of Adorno to analyze a singular, seemingly marginal cultural phenomena, rather than a more central one. He denies that a meaningful boundary can be fixed between marginal and mainstream, fragment and whole, the exception and the rule. For this very discrimination carries with it incipient elements of authoritarian control, which translate socially into violence against the marginalized, disenfranchised, overlooked groups, for whom Adorno had a private concern. Since fascist ideologies have by no means disappeared completely, the urge to transcend the details and assume a totalizing, totalitarian standpoint, from which to command the whole must be resisted. The world is given in splinters and fragments. The truth is in the details.

In "On Lyric Poetry and Society," one of his more neglected pieces in *Notes on Literature*,[15] Adorno gives his first analysis of poetic language in the epistemological role of offering a pure, nonconceptual language. This particular emphasis on language has been neglected by the critical literature, Hohendahl notes,[16] despite of the fact that the argument blends seamlessly with Adorno's much later assessment of language in *Aesthetic*

14. Northrop Frye, "Approaching the Lyric," in Chaviva Hosek and Patricia Parker, eds., *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 36. For many centuries, the lyric was regarded as relatively minor compared to epic poems. The content of lyric utterance resists taking a form that expresses what everyone experiences — it expresses not just what other people are unable to say, but what they are unable to feel. Adorno thinks the lyrical form tends to invite speculations about the psychology of the speaking subject, or to provoke indifference, since he thinks anything that resists generalization, that does not amount to useful, instrumental knowledge, is received indifferently.

15. "Lyrik und Gesellschaft" originally was delivered as a radio lecture in 1957, *Akzente* 4 (1957), pp. 8-26, and subsequently translated as "On Lyric Poetry and Society" in *Telos* 20 (Summer 1974). The original was reprinted in *Noten zur Literatur*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt, 1958-61), Vol. 1, pp. 79-80; see *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 1, tr. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). All references will be to the English translation in *Notes to Literature*, hereafter cited Lyr.

16. Hohendahl, *Prismatic Thought*, *op.cit.*, p. 235.

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Theory. A short poem by Mörike, "On a Hike," is an example of an affirmative artform that escapes Adorno's near wholesale rejection of affirmative art.[17]

I enter a village through the ancient tower
Friendly streets glow in the red evening hour
In an open window, now, and over
Full beds of flowers ever higher
Golden bell-sounds sweetly hover
And a single voice seems a nightingale choir:
That the flowers sway,
That breezes play,
And the rose' red to higher hue aspires.

Long stood I joyous, stupefied
How I left the gate, found the way
Beyond the town, I cannot say;
But here — how bright the world lies!
Above, bright purpose billows flow
Behind, the vaporous town in golden light
How roars the rushing stream, how roars the mill below
I reel in bliss, confused, misled —
O Muse! Throughout my heart has spread
A whisper of thy love.

Adorno's working method is to apply detailed literary analysis to a poem, by starting from the plain sense of words, which refer to small, concrete objects near-at-hand. This simplicity gives the poem a quality of intimacy and immediacy. No feeling is expressed that rises higher than that which can be grasped at the very moment of speech. Whereas, in the third person of the narrative epic poem, events seem to be happening without the speaker's intervention, so that the content of what is spoken can be detached from the speaker, in the first person of the lyric, events

17. The exemplary kind of lyric poetry Adorno has in mind in the lyric essay is some of the shorter, extremely compressed poems of Goethe, Mörike, Stefan George, Paul Valéry, and others. Adorno regards lyric poetry as a distinctively modern artform; his conception of the lyric excludes classical poets, like Pindar and Sappho, because, Adorno claims: "The great poets of the more distant past, who might be counted as lyric poets according to literary historical concepts of lyric poetry, Pindar and Alcaeus, for example, are very distant indeed from our primary idea of lyric poetry" (Lyr, p. 59). His demand that lyric poetry be "a form of reaction to the reification of the world," has only been met by poetry only recently, hence, poetry is "modern through and through."

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seem to be happening at the moment the words are being spoken, so that the content of what is said is inseparable from the contingencies surrounding the speech act and the speaking subject.[18] The language of the lyric holds the world at a distance, by resisting the kind of abstract generalities used in coping with ordinary experience. By limiting itself to intimate experiences, evoked by concrete objects close-at-hand, the lyric retreats from falsifying abstract speech to an intensely subjective mode, which responds to the poet's innermost, subtlest nuances of feeling and positively affirms the value of immediate, individual sensations. The familiar senses of words, viewed in a new light, give them a strange, foreign, unexpected sense, which elevates them above the language of mass culture and commerce.

"On a Hike" is a notable example of an artform that escapes the dilemma supposedly facing all modern art. On the one hand, the poem meets Adorno's demand to tell the truth, by refusing to adopt a depersonalizing abstract language, thereby resisting the dominant, falsifying linguistic and mental clichés embedded in language. This "tenderest, most fragile of forms" quietly protests the collective realm of commercial existence. The critical content of the poem consists in its use of the grammar most distinctive of the lyric: the first-person pronoun "I," the purest expression of a condition of utmost, unrestrained individuation and autonomous resistance to the collective. As recent history has shown, unquestioning identification with the rules and values of the central collective can turn nasty against those excluded at the margins. By uttering the absolutely singular word "I," the poet's voice asserts itself against the threat of dispossession of voice in an impersonal system by a complete withdrawal into particularity, thereby expressing a purity from the corrupting traces of a forced collective.[19] This sharp rupture from repressive collectivism makes the lyric an example of an artform embodying much of the truth-telling function of negative art.

Yet, "On a Hike" avoids negative art's abysmal failure in reception, because it does not rely on shocking and perplexing mechanisms of dissonance and rupture to lead the unregenerated individual to reconciliation. For instance, underlying the surface sense of the line, "how roars the rushing streams," lies a utopian vision of a counter world glimpsed through the raw, untamed, indomitable beauty of nature, which holds out the promise of

18. William Fitzgerald, *Time and the Lyric Action: a Study of the Speaking Subject in Pindar, Horace, Keats and Rilke*, unpublished dissertation (Princeton University: 1981).

19. Lyr, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

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redemption from the corrupting influences of the town below.[20] The sublime beauty of a roaring, rushing stream lies not in its violent threat to humans, but in its representation of a counterfactual state beyond oppressive constraints and human control. The poem conveys more than a minimal awareness of what a less oppressive world would look like, as if read off a photo negative of this bad actual world. The way the poem succeeds in escaping the horns of the supposedly impossible dilemma is by conveying a positive image of utopia through a determinate image of the sublime beauty of nature.

To allow that there is a strong component of reconciliation in Adorno is not to rush to the extreme optimistic reading. The way the poem conveys affirmative images is not, as Jameson would have it, by appropriating Hegel's seamless notion of reconciliation, in which the mind momentarily glimpses, obliquely through art, the possibility of a complete, unified world in which internal contradictions are removed.[21] As David Pan points out, Adorno bases his aesthetics on the harmonious beauty in nature as a fundamental aesthetic category, while simultaneously including considerations of contradictions which threaten this harmony.[22] The poem's promise of freedom from a repressed nature is equivocal, since it requires sacrificing the animal warmth and creature comforts in the town below ("Behind: the vaporous town in golden light"), and trembling in fear before the terrible beauty of nature in a nonrational state of stupefied confusion ("How I left the gate, and found the way beyond the town, I cannot say"). The poem's dialectical, critical edge consists of irreconcilably conjoining two opposed and conceptually exclusionary phenomena: the elevated promise of redemption conveyed through terrifying images of a nature free of domination is held in unresolved tension with the fear of separation from the safety of civilization below. And if the source of real reconciliation is this felt shudder before the indefinable beauty of nature, as it is for Adorno, then lyric poetry, which evokes this indeterminate nature, however ambiguously must count in the process of social emancipation. [23]

The very persistence of ineradicable contradictions in his concept of reconciliation makes it ambiguous with his concept of negation. Admittedly, the pessimistic reading has a textual basis for selectively

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20. *Ibid.*, pp. 41 and 191.
21. Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, *op. cit.*, pp. 38, 41 and 44.
22. David Pan, "Adorno's Aesthetics of Myth," in *Telos* 115 (Spring 1999), pp. 16-18.
23. AT, pp. 108-110. On the centrality of the sublime beauty in nature in *Aesthetic Theory*, see Albrecht Wellmer, "Adorno, Modernity, and the Sublime," in *The Actuality of Adorno*, *op. cit.*

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stressing the negative elements. The optimistic reading is also right in thinking that Adorno's thought is profoundly Hegelian. But it is mistaken in thinking that he simply rehabilitates a Hegelian-style project of reconciliation in a world, in which devolving social conditions rule out the very conditions of its possibility. It is still an open question, in either reading, as to how a few autonomous individuals manage to resist the dominant ideology and its thought forms. Adorno's social psychology is at its most pessimistic when he perceives in poets, as well as in cultural and social critics, not just the problem of a falsifying language, but some deep internal obstacle to waging resistance. By internalizing what was once an external authority, in the form of self-control, poets encounter in their own interests, impulses, and desires something related to the need for self-preservation, which forces them indirectly to collude with authorities and to reproduce blindly the prevalent social categories. Adorno's sociopsychological profile of the passive, manipulable individual presents the following problem: how does poetic language escape the distorting force of conceptual thought, if poets have to use much the same words as everyone else? If the dominant social structure perverts all culture, language, and thought, including even the logical laws governing discursive thought itself, if engaged poets have to draw on the same stock of ideas, concepts, and ready-made aspects of language, which are marked by the very distortions and untruths from which they seek to distance themselves, where in all of this is there room for authentic resistance?[24]

Clearly, Adorno's aesthetics cannot be as desolate as his critics claim it is, since his very idea of ideological "distortion" implies reference to some source of potential resistance or standpoint from which there is no such distortion, and from which it may be possible for individuals to experience authentic needs and interests.[25] If he were denouncing all artistic critique as tainted by crass materialism, commercial motives, and instrumental rationality, then there would be no point in valuing legitimate resistance and protest over cynical resignation and blind complicity. He thinks that if one could conceive of a state in which socially oppressive conditions had not yet robbed one of real interests, then it would be possible to recognize that one's real interests are different from

24. Lyr, p. 43; "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *The Adorno Reader*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8; *Minima Moralia*, tr. by E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Thetford Press, 1974), p. 247.

25. See David Couzens Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. by David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 125.

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ideologically-distorted ones, and to identify with them. Adorno's social psychology allows for an instinctual nature which, at its core, remains resistant to distorting social influences, consisting of latent interests that one would not even be able to identify, because of the pressure to conform personal interests to more socially-acceptable ones.[26] From the "immanent" standpoint of this essential nature and with the help of retrieval through psychoanalysis, a few, isolated individuals can reappropriate language, so that it once again becomes a vehicle for authentically expressing latent needs and interests.[27]

If modern art is to provide a serious and effective catalyst for protest and resistance, as Adorno thinks it must, then it must point to some vantage point distinguishable from the hated social order, to the potential for a utopia in which thought and language once again can become a vehicle for expressing authentic needs and experiences. Literary expression in his social theory serves as the premiere vehicle for bringing to light this immanent standpoint, from which it is possible to imagine what one's interests would be like free of ideological distortion. The role of art is not to resign itself cynically to the badness of the world, or to protest futilely against a social condition, which it is unable to change. Art that opposes society only negatively is guilty of complicity, by leaving everything as it is.[28] Lived experience of art allows one to sense in spontaneous, unconscious literary elements the existence of a fictional point of reference of how the world *would* look to members of a utopia, if only it were changed. Yet, since his social analysis rejects the notion that there is such a transcendent standpoint of resistance, autonomous and independent of society and its norms, from which cultural criticism may be waged,[29] it is still an open question whether the dissonant, fragmentary, unassimilable form in which negative modern art expresses the truth, effectively denounces the established social order, or is indistinguishable from the ugliness and repulsiveness against which it protests.

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26. See Jessica Benjamin, "The End of Internalization: Adorno's Social Psychology," in *Telos* 32 (Summer 1977), p. 43; and Axel Honneth, *Critique of Power, Reflective Stages in a Critical Theory*, tr. by Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), p. 86; and Couzens Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress, *op. cit.*

27. Lyr, p. 45. Cf. Jochen Schulte-Sasse's forward to *Theory of the Avante-Garde*, Peter Burger, *Theory and History of Literature*, Vol. 4 (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1984), p. xxvii.

28. AT, p. 194.

29. "Cultural Criticism and Society," in *The Adorno Reader*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8 and 207-8; and Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967).

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The Demand for Authenticity

Adorno's first demand of poetry, then, is designed to get around the problem of socially exploitative influences introducing themselves into the darkest corners of consciousness at the very points where he wants to ground resistance. He demands that art oppose authentically a truthful, utopian counterpart to false, rationally-organized society. Since human alienation is a state in which the use of conceptual knowledge dominates and repressively controls nature, including internal nature, he counters this with an alternative poetic language, governed by alternative laws of logic, which abandons this need for self-control. To oppose the impulse to relate coercively and instrumentally to language and to self, Adorno urges poets to abandon the aim of self-preservation and to yield spontaneously to an impulse of self-surrender. This is a state in which the poet attempts to free himself from those false aspects of his socially-determined self by "forgetting himself, by cultivating a condition of selflessness or impersonality, by making of himself a vessel for the ideal of pure language."[30] Adorno thereby redirects focus away from the all-too-individual psychology of the poet, a perspective that relates to nature from the viewpoint of conquest and control, toward the ideal of a pure language. The terms he uses to describe this unconscious moment of submersion in pure language, such as "self-loss" and "spontaneity," indicate a self distanced from commercial motives and material objects, from coercive impulses and instincts to dominate nature and other people. What remains is a primitive, instinctual integrity at the core, which allows one to make of speech a truthful instrument of the authentic, impersonal perspective.

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30. Lyr, p. 52; AT, p. 97. Poem's true social content does not consist in the poet consciously and intentionally resisting social pressures by giving the poem an explicitly didactic or social content (Lyr, p. 43, AT, pp. 344-5). No genuinely free agent wants to experience the didactic content of a poem as preaching a moral imperative or injunction. It is contradictory to try to lead independent readers to the correct attitude, which will release them from their condition of servitude, by applying overt pressure or coercion. Thus, Adorno excludes Ben Jonson, whose poems have an explicit social or political content. Cf. Annabel Patterson, "Lyric and Society in Jonson's *Underwood*," in *Lyric Poetry: Beyond New Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 151. The most perfect social use of lyric, Adorno claims, is precisely in not being directly moralizing, didactic, or propagating moral ideas. He condemns Plato's near wholesale rejection of poetry as owing to a *parti-pris* to vindicate the importance of only a very narrow type of art that would function as propaganda to promote his ideal state. The way to avoid the risk of the artist intentionally giving the work a falsely committed political content, Adorno thinks, is to locate negative content in the artwork's structure and formal qualities, regardless of any conscious ideas or intentions the author may have about its explicit sociopolitical content.

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The Demand for Impersonality

Adorno, for whom unresolved suffering is related to authentic critique,[31] likens the attitude necessary for artistic resistance to that of the criminal's, whose alienation from the established order gives him an independent perspective from which to criticize it. But the attitude that allows the criminal to avoid mindless identification with the hated social order is clearly untenable. The suffering artistic subject, who similarly declines to participate in culture, nevertheless longs for a condition in which his love for that social order is no longer disfigured. He cannot remain in a private monologue with himself, but must reintegrate his voice back into the chorus of human speech. Adorno's Marxist emphasis on forces of production lead him to say that the poet, as social critic, must participate in culture. Not even the private lyric can turn away from society, because it is artistic labor and, as such, is social labor, and subject to productive forces as is any social commodity or product.

Adorno balances his demand for authenticity, given in terms of an exaggerated subjectivity at the expense of society, with a second demand that gives poetry an objective, social dimension. It is meant to convert what traditionally have been regarded as vices peculiar to the lyric — morbid introspection, asocial, abnormal introvertedness — into what gives the lyric a critical, social content. The poet who merely asserts the importance of an exaggerated individuality against the threat of an impersonal society, by severing all connections to that hated social reality, does not neutralize the threat by withdrawing into an interior realm of fine feelings. This disengagement with reality is a move Adorno associates most notably with Marcuse's valorization of the cultural products of the bourgeois epoch.[32] Marcuse discerned in the harmonious utopia depicted in works of German Classicism a sharp contrast with conflicted social relations — a contrast

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31. Adorno, "Culture Criticism and Society," p. 209; AT, p. 34. Pan traces this element of suffering back to Nietzsche's notion that pain and suffering born of contradiction are at the heart of primordial forces of nature (AT, p. 335).

32. Marcuse, "Affirmative Character of Culture," in *Negations* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 95 and 102; and *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), pp. 7-8. Marcuse associates German Classicism with a revolt against the prosaic, unspiritual nature of the times, and an attempt to realize, in the realm of creative spirit, those values missing from everyday reality. Reconciliation means giving the appearance of resolving violent human conflicts by lifting them onto a higher plane, that of spirit. The harmony of the "beautiful soul," exemplified in Goethe's works, reconciled antagonistic elements of actual existence in an ideal, interior realm — a realm detached from everyday existence. See Albert Salomon, *In Praise of Enlightenment*, Ch. V: "The Place of the Poet in a World of Revolution: Goethe (1832) and Goethe (1849)" (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962).

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which indirectly served as a reflection of, an index to, and an indictment of antagonistic relations in the social order.

Adorno's attempt to provide a concept of reconciliation proceeds negatively, by rejecting Marcuse's approach as "excessively abstract,"[33] because it defines negative content through simple opposition to that which it protests. By this reasoning, Adorno argues *ad absurdum* that all affirmative works, even those which reconcile conflicts in a spurious harmony, can be defended as critical by virtue of their contrast with reality. The specific achievement of the modern lyric over the German classical epic and narrative is that its negative-utopian dimensions do not derive from an abstract contrast between a unified work and a divided world, from a retreat from destructive social forces to an ideal sphere of fine feelings.[34] To appreciate Adorno's second demand, it is necessary to move beyond the false alternatives that emerge from the attempt to fix a transcendent perspective on social reality: a false choice between uncritically accepting disharmonious reality or retreating to an atemporal world of harmonious ideals. Far from abstractly negating social reality, Adorno's second demand insists that lyric engage intensely with collective experience and the communicative aspects of language.

First Person Plural

Every time I say "I," paradoxically I express an absolutely singular voice opposed to the collective. Yet, the meaning of "I" has a universal aspect which identifies me with all others who say "I." Adorno is committed to positive dialectics in Hegel to the extent that he holds to Hegel's dictum that, "the moment of the will, which allows me to say 'I,' is the moment of universality, in which I identify myself with what is common to all beings, who also call themselves 'I.'"[35] Adorno's negative dialectic is in tension with Hegel's positive dialectic to the extent that he does not reconcile the terms "I" and the collective "we" through a synthesis or unity in thought, which overcomes the contradiction at a higher level. The force of the copula in the first person plural expression, the "I" that is a "We," cannot be the "is" of identity — certainly, not in these times, when such an identification runs the risk of assimilation and complicity with repressive collectivism. The copula has an alternative function in Adorno's negative dialectic,[36] i.e., to relate the particular to the general in

33. AT, p. 228.
34. Lyr, p. 49.
35. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* §5, *Encyclopaedia* (EG) §381 Remark.
36. *Negative Dialectics*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

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a convergence in which the poet's act of self-negation shifts the stance away from a display of exaggerated individuality — expressed through the lyrical "I" resisting antithetical social forces — toward a state of immersion in the communicative, universal aspects of language.

Suspension of Logic

Paradoxically, it is the task of art to show that this dual set of demands being placed on it, authenticity and impersonality, are incompatible. Adorno casts poets in the dual role as prophetic visionaries, whose project is to speak a universal language and to reintegrate their voices into a happy, loving humanity, *and* as isolated, condemnatory social critic, who must actively affirm their utmost individuality in unhappy opposition to society and its falsifying language forms. The two demands are inconsistent, if by "self-loss" they encourage a total collapse of self into an absolute, objective authority. His two approaches cannot be combined, if he means that the correct relation of the self to larger, impersonal forces is one of submissive, self-denigrating, instrumental service to a higher, impersonal voice of authority, as represented by falsifying language forms and blind collective action. The whole point of Adorno demanding authenticity was to insist on the possession and expression of an authentic individual voice, revealing its unique interiority through language. For only then was it supposed to be possible for individuals to resist identification with a social condition that they find exploitative of their unique needs and authentic experiences.

Underlying Adorno's concept of reconciliation is this deliberate adoption of two mutually exclusive alternatives. The persistent conflict between his two primary demands, between exaggerated self-assertion and loss of self, is what prevents authentic art from giving a false reconciliation. Critical poetry avoids reconciliation of the false, illusory kind that reality denies, by unconsciously embodying an analogue of this social contradiction as it exists in reality: in the form of an unreconcilable contradiction between an exaggeratedly individual subject, resisting the threat of dispossession of voice, and a self-abnegating subject abandoning the urge for self-preservation, bent on self-extinction. The incommensurability of the poet's voice to impersonal forces in the poem is what truthfully reflects and is an index to antagonistic relations to an impersonal society and its common language forms. If the poem reproduces social contradictions in aesthetic form, allowing them to be experienced without regurgitating or endorsing them, this provides a therapeutically dissonant

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experience of social contradictions in literary form, which becomes one of reconciliation, rather than contradiction and violence, because it does not just reproduce contradictions in an identical form indistinguishable from their ugly appearance in society. Yet, the presence of ineradicable contradictions gives the poem an undecipherable content, which keeps it from directly communicating its content.

In this sense, Adorno thinks poetry and cultural criticism in general are contradictory and at odds with themselves, and, in this sense, "untrue." He relishes the paradox that art must be at odds with itself, and strive to go beyond its own confines, in order to be properly critical, while remaining art: "If it lets go of its autonomy, it sells out to the established order; whereas, if it tries to stay strictly within the limits of its autonomous confines, it becomes equally co-optable, living an effectiveless life in its appointed niche."[37] The failure or poem's "untruth" of the poem disrupts the guilty literary practice of writing lyrical poetry in this age in which affirmative ideals and security are no longer possible. Since modern society is so pervasively evil that it is unable to criticize itself, art must have built into it a mechanism for disrupting itself, through which it tacitly induces immanent internal criticism, by calling attention to its contradictory nature. A healthy self-criticism is a prerequisite for the possibility of inducing further criticism of the social order. And the fact that lyric truthfully reflects the contradictions in the culture it criticizes makes it "in all its untruth, as true as culture is untrue."

To appreciate Adorno's concept of genuine reconciliation is to understand this peculiar sense in which the conflict between his two primary demands cannot be reconciled, if the standard for resolving contradictions is a dialectical procedure that reconciles two opposed terms, by either rejecting the one that is generating the contradiction, or overcoming opposition at a higher level through a synthesis into a third mediating term. He rejects a strictly Hegelian notion of reconciliation based on the mediation of opposite concepts, because he thinks it implicitly validates certain conventional, logical laws governing discursive thought. His critique of conceptual language goes beyond the surface sense of words and sentences to a deeper understanding of their complex grammatical interrelations to other sentences, and the logical relations underlying these sentences. Since he thinks the perverting dominant ideology pervades every corner of thought, even the fundamental logical laws governing conceptual thought

37. "Cultural Criticism and Society," *op. cit.*, p. 199. AT, p. 337.

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itself, he rejects certain principles of Aristotelian logic, such as the law of non-contradiction, the law of the excluded middle, and principles of syllogistic reasoning, as repressive and coercive, constraining and controlling what can be thought and experienced.[38] To allow the idea of reconciliation to be limited by this repressive logic would be to capitulate to the very rational principles of organized society that he thinks the dominant social powers are using to control thought.

Adorno's way of dialectically establishing reconciliation is to accentuate ineradicable contradictions, rather than harmonious syntheses. Reconciliation lies in the very possibility of finding a nonconceptual, aesthetic mode of truth, freed from a repressive identity logic, which, by virtue of identifying and appropriating the contradictions, disunities, and discontinuities of an unredeemed world, thereby approximates a genuine reconciliation. While he does not deny the validity of traditional logic, his notion of reconciliation involves a logic of contradiction and a radical consciousness of non-identity, which requires suspension of this repressive logic.

The imagery of lyric poetry is beautiful and harmonious on the surface, but it falls apart underneath, because it is based on this deviant logic. The alternative logic of art serves as a protest against society, by distancing one from traditional logical principles, syllogistic reasoning, methodological rigor, and systematic proofs, which oppressively organize and coercively limit what can be thought and felt. Art has its own logic, which lies beyond the reach of rational understanding, in which the two poles of the opposition, individual and society, get "aesthetically reconciled" through formal literary elements in a kind of reconciliation that traditional logic and real life deny. In this sense, Adorno thinks that the poet's submission to the impersonal aspects of language does *not* entail the loss of identity: "The moment of self-forgetting in which the subject submerges in language is *not* a sacrifice of himself to being. It is *not* a moment of compulsion or force, not even of force against the speaking subject, but rather a moment of *reconciliation*."[39] This deviant logic in art brings about an "aesthetic reconciliation," which is not the bad, imaginary, illusory kind that can be understood rationally and communicated discursively, but rather the kind of impossible reconciliation that requires a suspension of the discursive, logical principles that serve as tools of instrumental rationality.

Adorno aptly describes the alternative logic underlying his notion of

38. AT, pp. 197-200. These reflections were inspired by conversations about poetry and logic with Allen Grossman at Johns Hopkins University.

39. Lyr, p. 44.

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reconciliation using impossibly ambiguous formulations, such as "unconciliatory reconciliation," "an ambivalence between speech and silence," "a transformation of exaggerated individuality to self-annihilation."[40] The obscurity of his expressions underscore his demand that the laws of discursive logic must be held in a "suspended state," to truthfully reflect the fact that what is being enacted in the poem's materials is a sensuous analogue of the unreconcilable tension in the poet's relation to society. The non-conceptual elements in a poem, which resist incorporation by a traditional logic, appear in the structural and syntactic texture of lyric, which sometimes can verge on a breakdown of sense or degenerate into pure sound. This logic is reflected in the use of unconventional grammatical and linguistic constructions, especially in the illogical use of the pronoun "I" to evoke the collective "we." If one takes identity logic seriously, then the "I" cannot literally be a "we," because it is expressed through the agency of a single "I." To understand the first person plural use of the pronoun "I," it is necessary to suspend the law of identity, a = a (i.e., something must be identical to itself and not another thing; a thing is what it is and not another thing). Still very much in the grip of Hegel's logic, Adorno captures the essentially social content of the "I," by subsuming its use under a logic of non-identity, as an instantiation of his identity-in-difference thesis.

A concrete illustration of this alternative logic can be found in Goethe's "Wanderer's Nightsong" — a poem Adorno thinks possesses an unqualified authenticity:

> Over all the hill-tops
> Is quiet now,
> In all the tree-tops
> You hear
> Hardly a breath;
> The birds are asleep in the trees:
> Wait; soon like these.
> You too shall rest.

The final line captures the moment before falling into a deep sleep, which will put an end to all of life's back-breaking weariness and disfiguring

40. See Shierry Weber Nicholsen's detailed analysis of Adorno's use of impenetrable expressions, associations and equivocations, not based on logical, discursive argumentation, but intended to provoke further reflection. *Exact Imagination, Late Work: On Adorno's Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), pp. 113-24.

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suffering. On the surface, the consolatory line does not speak of things alienating and disturbing; but the final line, "You too shall rest," is ambiguous between sleep and death. The poem does not deny or violate any cherished laws of logic, but rather thematizes a suspension of the law of the excluded middle, by striving to articulate an uneasy peace, poised precariously between sleep and death, not fully expressible using the ordinary concept "rest" in its straightforward, signifying function. The poem avoids a false reconciliation, by promising an ambiguously happy sleep, which could not be purchased without the dream disintegrating in death. This ineffable contradiction reflects the speaker's contradictory and ever-shifting relation to impersonal social conditions, in which an impossible psychic tension is produced by conflicting urges: to resist in death a social condition that evokes such suffering, yet to identify with it longingly, because it evokes such love. Both unhappiness with the social order, and longing for a potential in which ones love of it no longer is disfigured, find expression in this idea of an impossible suspension between life and death, self-affirmation and self-annihilation, identification and resistance, complicitous silence and shattered speech.

The authentic quality of poetry Adorno admires holds this indecipherable, inscrutable quality of language in conjunction with its signifying, communicative function in an intolerable suspension, an illogical conjunction, a dialectical tension. This permanent contradiction is at the heart of all successful art, in which the speaking subject strives to resist a prison environment that evokes such suffering, yet tries to reintegrate with others in an open-air prison, because it evokes such love, and strives to gain an authentic foothold beyond the prison walls, by using acceptable forms of communication: without violence, without taking a shortcut through crime.

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Mimesis and Nemesis: The Economy as a Theological Problem

Wolfgang Palaver

Globalization, today's most significant economic phenomenon, has as many detractors as defenders, and has recently become the focus of protests by students, anarchists and organized labor. Although many of its detractors have economic axes to grind, many others object to globalization on social, political and religious grounds.[1] Thus, it might be well to go back to some of the very early — mythical, philosophical, and Biblical — sources of economic and political thinking to understand how religion played a part in the political taming of economic competition.

Hesiod's Economic Theology

Competition, one of the governing principles of economics, is often seen as a major stimulus to productivity. Yet, even those who emphasize the positive side of competition know that it also has its dark side, resembling a form of envy leading to destruction. Knowledge about the ambiguity of competition seems to be as old as culture itself. Hesiod's thoughts on the Greek goddess Eris emphasize the double-sidedness of competition. In his *Theogony*, Hesiod mentions the goddess Eris as a purely evil power, meaning discord and war.[2] In Greek mythology, she causes the Trojan War by inciting envious rivalry among Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena. Accord-

1. See, e.g., George Soros, "The Capitalist Threat," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 279, No. 2 (February 1997), pp. 45-58; and Patrick J. Buchanan, *The Great Betrayal: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global* (Boston: Little Brown & Company, 1998).

2. Hesiod *Theogony* 225-232.

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ing to Homer, Eris is the "sister and comrade of man-slaying Ares."[3] In a famous passage in his poem, *Works and Days*, Hesiod corrects this one-sided image of Eris, and mentions a second goddess who inspires benevolent competition: "She stirs up even the shiftless to toil; for a man grows eager to work when he considers his neighbor, a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and put his house in good order; and the neighbor vies with his neighbor as he hurries after wealth. This Strife is wholesome for men. And potter is angry with potter, craftsman with craftsman, and beggar is jealous of beggar, and minstrel of minstrel."[4]

Hesiod's distinction between a goddess of destructive envy and one of creative emulation alludes to a differentiation at the core of all ethical considerations on competition until today. In ancient and medieval philosophy, Hesiod's two goddesses are paralleled in the distinction between bad envy and good emulation. Alexander Rüstow, one of the founding fathers of German liberalism after WWII, used Hesiod's poem to illustrate the distinction between a dangerous, cut-throat competition (monopolism, subventionism, protectionism) and a good, efficient competition.[5] Helmut Schoeck's classic work on envy attempts to separate emulation and envy in the classic tradition.[6] Even Philippe Thureau-Dangin's harsh criticism of the predominance of competition today emphasizes the necessity to distinguish between envy and emulation. They do not differ with respect to this classic distinction, but only in their views on who is to blame for being envious. Whereas Schoeck, in accord with economic liberalism, links envy with socialism, Thureau-Dangin identifies modern economic competition with envy.[7]

For propagandistic reasons, both of these positions seem to simplify what Hesiod describes as a rather ambivalent matter. The fact that Hesiod

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3. Homer, *Illiad* 4.441. If not otherwise indicated, all ancient sources are quoted after the Perseus Project: See Gregory R. Crane, ed., *The Perseus Project*, *http://www.perseus.tufts.edu*, May, 1999.

4. Hesiod *Works and Days* 20-26.

5. Alexander Rüstow, *Das Versagen des Wirtschaftsliberalismus*, 2nd ed. (Bad Godesberg: Helmut Küpper, 1950), pp. 68-70, 94, 135. Cf. also Alexander Rüstow, "General Sociological Causes of the Economic Disintegration and Possibilities of Reconstruction," in Wilhelm Röpke, *International Economic Disintegration* (London: Wilhelm Hodge and Company, 1942), pp. 274-275 and 281.

6. Helmut Schoeck, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*, tr. by M. Glenny and B. Ross (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969), pp. 20-23.

7. Philippe Thureau-Dangin, *Die Ellenbogen-Gesellschaft: Vom zerstörerischen Wesen der Konkurrenz*, tr. and ed. by M. Jeismann (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1998), pp. 235-238.

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named both of these goddesses Eris demonstrates their common root or even identity. The doubling of Eris hides her ambiguity.[8] A closer look reveals a notable difference between Hesiod and the classic separation of envy and emulation, because it is not envy as such that marks the difference between the two goddesses, but, as Nietzsche pointed out, they personify two different modes of envy.[9] Hesiod's work indicates that a simple and lasting distinction between envy and emulation is not really possible. But that does not make human beings mere puppets in the hands of good or bad gods. A proper separation of envy and emulation depends on the specific constitution of a society. Hesiod's antidotes against the bad Eris are agricultural labor and the rule of justice.

Hesiod's world is far from the modern world of globalized capitalism. It is a rural world that focuses on agriculture not on trade, and the natural habitat of the good Eris is the rural world. The bad Eris rules at the courthouse, where people who do not work fight for their benefit.[10] It is agricultural work that inflames envy in those who are idle and forces them to overcome their shameful status: "Work is no disgrace: it is idleness which is a disgrace. But if you work, the idle will soon envy you as you grow rich, for fame and renown attend on wealth."[11] The benevolence of competition in this world of agricultural work is also due to the fact that this earthbound labor is far from modern nihilistic competition for mere honor or recognition. "They flourish continually with good things, and do not travel on ships, for the grain-giving earth bears them fruit."[12] Similarly, Xenophon's *Hiero* praises emulation among men as a force leading to prosperity. But his concept of emulation is not identical to Hesiod's, because to him it means "striving for honor." According to Xenophon, farming — "the least accustomed to being managed by emulation" —

8. Cf. Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Greek Tragedy: Problems of Interpretation," in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. by R. Macksey and E. Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), p. 289; Jean-Pierre Vernant, "At Man's Table: Hesiod's Foundation Myth of Sacrifice," in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice among the Greeks*, tr. by P. Wissing (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 33; Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, tr. by J. Lloyd (New York: Zone Books, 1990), p. 335.

9. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Homer's Wettkampf," in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988), Vol. 1, pp. 783-792; "Der Neid und sein edlerer Bruder," in *Studienaugabe*, Vol. 2, p. 562 ("Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II," Nr. 29). Cf. Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 134.

10. Hesiod, Works and Days, 27-41.

11. *Ibid.*, 311-312.

12. *Ibid.*, 235-236; and 617-693.

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would greatly improve "if someone should offer prizes by fields or villages to those who best cultivate the ground."[13]

Hesiod's good Eris depends also on the rule of justice, which means the observance of the law that constitutes society. This law is a divine *nomos* embracing a righteous custom. Zeus "has ordained this law [*nómos*] for men, that fishes and beasts and winged fowls should devour one another, for right is not in them; but to mankind he gave right [*dikè*] which proves far the best."[14] Hesiod was the first to use the term *nomos* in ancient Greece, and to evidence an archaic understanding of it.[15] He understood *nomos* to mean an objective order of a group of human beings, which comes close to Carl Schmitt's reconstruction of its original meaning as a concrete order that is given by gods, earthbound, and spatial.[16] But Schmitt's *nomos* has traces of a fundamental ambiguity going back to Pindar's *nomos basileus,* i.e., Hercules' violent action overcoming a violent state of nature, whereas Hesiod's *nomos* appears to rely on a neat separation of violence and justice.[17] According to Hesiod, listening to right means "ceasing altogether to think of violence."[18] But this superficial impression is not really true, since Hesiod's distinction between the good and the bad Eris veils an intrinsic ambivalence of the goddess Eris or of envy, and his *nomos* is also not free of ambiguity.

Nomos is not just given by Zeus to human beings, it is also violently protected by the gods. "Upon the bounteous earth Zeus has thrice ten thousand spirits, watchers of mortal men, and these keep watch on judgements and deeds of wrong as they roam, clothed in mist, all over the earth."[19] The anger of the gods and the divine punishment of hubris, Dikè (the avenging

13. Xenophon *Hiero* 9; cf. Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, ed. by V. Gourevitch and M. S. Roth (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 18.

14. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 275-278; and 387.

15. Cf. Felix Heinimann, *Nomos und Physis: Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts*, 5th ed. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), pp. 61-65.

16. Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*, 3rd edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), pp. 36-48; Carl Schmitt, "Appropriation/Distribution/Production: Toward a Proper Formulation of Basic Questions of any Social and Economic Order (1953)," in *Telos* 95 (Spring 1993), pp. 52-64; Carl Schmitt, "Nomos - Nahme - Name," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos: Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1916-1969*, ed. by Gunther Maschke (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1995), pp. 573-591. Cf. Wolfgang Palaver, "Carl Schmitt on *Nomos* and Space," in *Telos* 106 (Winter 1996), pp. 106-109.

17. Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, tr. by D. Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 30-38.

18. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 273.

19. *Ibid.*, 251-254.

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goddess of justice), Atè (the goddess of mischief), Aidos (the goddess personifying the sense of shame), and Nemesis (the personification of divine retribution) belong essentially to this *nomos*.[20] Hesiod's *nomos* is a good example of an order *containing* violence in both senses of the word. On the one hand, *nomos* is the opposite of violence; on the other, it is rooted in what Walter Benjamin, referring to Niobe (whose pride was punished by divine vengeance: nemesis), called "mythical violence."[21] In order to understand how *nomos* makes Hesiod's distinction between the good and the bad Eris possible, reference must be made to its relation to Nemesis, one of the sisters of Eris. She is the goddess of retributive justice or vengeance that helps to prevent lawlessness. Like *nomos*, her name derives from the Greek word *nemein,* which means to distribute or to pasture.[22] As long as Nemesis is part of the human world and its *nomos*, envy and other evils are kept in check. Hesiod views his own corrupted age as one in which Nemesis is likely to forsake the world and leave envy without control: "Envy, foul-mouthed, delighting in evil, with scowling face, will go along with wretched men one and all. And then Aidos and Nemesis, with their sweet forms wrapped in white robes, will go from the wide-pathed earth and forsake mankind to join the company of the deathless gods: and bitter sorrows will be left for mortal men, and there will be no help against evil."[23]

Like Nemesis, Dikè also belongs to Hesiod's *nomos*. She too represents an ambivalent order of justice that overcomes violence through violence. These two goddesses are close relatives, and both represent divine vengeance punishing hubris.[24] According to Greek mythology, Dikè[25] is the mother of

20. *Ibid.*, 1-10, 36, 124, 196-200, 214-223, 231, 238-284, 303, 333-334, 352, 413, 711, 741, and 756.

21. Cf. Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, tr. by E. Jephcott, ed. and with an Introduction by P. Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), pp. 294-295.

22. Cf. Hermann Posnansky, *Nemesis und Adrasteia: Eine mythologisch-archäologische Abhandlung* (Breslau: Verlag von Wilhelm Koebner, 1890), pp. 1-6; Eckhart Peterich, *Die Theologie der Hellenen* (Leipzig: Verlag Jakob Hegner, 1938), pp. 225f; Emmanuel Laroche, *Histoire de la racine NEM- en grec ancien* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1949); Luigi Zoja, *Growth and Guilt: Psychology and the Limits of Development*, tr. from the Italian by H. Martin (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 52.

23. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 194-200.

24. Cf. Aeschylus, Fragment 148; Posnansky, *Nemesis*, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Karl Kerényi, *Die Mythologie der Griechen. Band 1: Die Götter- und Menschheitsgeschichten* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), pp. 82-83; Zoja, *Growth*, *op. cit.*, p. 108. In the New Testament, Diké is the goddess of vengeance (Acts 28:4).

25. Cf. Heraklit, Fragment 78 (= Diels 22, B 94) in *Die Vorsokratiker I*, Auswahl der Fragmente, Übersetzung und Erläuterungen von J. Mansfeld (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1983); Aeschylus *The Libation-Bearers*, 639-651; *Eumenides*, 511-512.

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Nemesis and closely related to the revengeful Erinyes. Dikè's ambiguity proves that Hesiod's *nomos* is no less ambivalent than Schmitt's.[26]

Nemesis is not just a sister of both the good and the bad Eris. She also represents a special envy: envy of the gods.[27] As with the paradoxical relation of *nomos* and violence, there is also a paradoxical logic of envy in Hesiod's poem. Nemesis, divine envy, keeps destructive envy — the bad Eris — in check, and enables a prosperous form of envy — the good Eris — to flourish. At the heart of Hesiod's *nomos* is an *economic theology* containing envy. His economic theology resembles Heraclitus' paradoxical philosophy, which claims that "strife is the father and king of all," and that antagonistic forces lead to harmony.[28] Heraclitus even explicitly identifies *eris* and *dikè* or discord and justice.[29] As in Heraclitus, Hesiod's economic theology logically means a "*concordia discors*" or a "*discordia concors*."[30]

Hesiod's economic theology can be understood with the help of René Girard's mimetic theory. Eris resembles mimetic desire, i.e., a desire according to the other; human beings desire what other people desire. What Hesiod calls the good Eris is mimetic desire governing economic life. [31]

26. On the ambivalent nature of *dikè*, see Aeschylus, *The Libation-Bearers*, 461; J.-P. Vernant, "Tragedy," *op. cit.*, pp. 275, 279-283, 290; J.-P. Vernant/P. Vidal-Naquet, *Myth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 40, 155, 306, 418, 428.

27. Cf. E. Peterich, *Theologie*, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-227; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 31, 62; H. Schoeck, *Envy*, *op. cit.*

28. Heraklit, Fragment 50 (= Diels 22, B 53), 47 (22, B 8), 49 (22, B 51). Cf. E. Peterich, *Theologie*, *op. cit.*, p. 207. It was Alexander Rüstow, who coined the term "economic theology" ("*Wirtschaftstheologie*") and claimed that economic liberalism had to be understood in the light of its "theological-metaphysical origin" in pagan theologies of Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Stoicism. See A. Rüstow, *Versagen*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-8, 14, 16, 17, 19, 38; A. Rüstow, "Causes," *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270.

29. Heraklit, Fragment 51 (= Diels 22, B 80). Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: 'The Mystical Foundation of Authority'," tr. by M. Quaintance, in *Cardozo Law Review* 11.919 (1990), pp. 927, 991; Pierre Saint-Amand, *The Laws of Hostility: Politics, Violence, and Enlightenment*, Foreword by C. Mouffe, tr. by J. C. Gage (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 2.

30. Cf. Jacob Burckhardt, *Über das Studium der Geschichte*, der Text der "Weltgeschichtlichen Betrachtungen" auf Grund der Vorarbeiten von E. Ziegler nach den Handschriften herausgegeben von P. Ganz (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1982), p. 344.

31. René Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, with J.-M. Oughourlian and G. Lefort, tr. by S. Bann and M. Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 11, 92-93, 306-307; René Girard, "Innovation and Repetition," in *SubStance* pp. 62-63 (1990), pp. 7-20; René Girard, *Quand ces choses commenceront . . ., Entretiens avec M. Treguer* (Paris: arléa, 1994), pp. 70-72; Paul Dumouchel and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *L'Enfer des choses: René Girard et la logique de l'économie* (Paris: Édition du Seuil, 1979); Jim Grote and John McGeeney, *Clever as Serpents: Business Ethics and Office Politics* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997).

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Mimetic desire as competition, rivalry, or emulation stimulates human activity and causes an increase in productivity. Like Eris, mimetic desire is not only a benevolent force; it has a destructive side: envy. Both — emulation and envy — are characterized by its triangular structure: subject/model/object. "Without men's tendency to imitate other's desires, envy would not be so extraordinarily powerful in human society. Envy is merely the reciprocal borrowing of desires, under conditions of sufficient equality to ensure the development of mimetic rivalries."[32] Like Hesiod's Eris, mimetic desire can be benevolent or destructive. It is both the emotion causing economic prosperity and the emotion leading to rivalry and violence between human beings.

Hesiod's *nomos* can also be explained with the help of mimetic theory. According to Girard, a mimetic crisis of mutual violence at the beginning of human civilization was resolved by a scapegoat mechanism that led to a religiously controlled cultural order. The sacrificial transformation of chaos into order through the scapegoat mechanism was driven by the same mimetic force that led to the crisis of envious rivalry. Whereas mimetic desire in its acquisitive mode causes "disunity among those who cannot possess their common object together," it is its antagonistic mode—a highly intensified form of mimetic rivalry in which violence between the opponents has been substituted for all concrete objects — that creates "solidarity among those who can fight the same enemy together."[33] Driven by mimetic contagion, archaic societies created order by killing or expelling one of their members. The lynch mob does not know what it is doing, but experiences its act as if governed by the monstrous being who is to be killed, as if he or she were a god who causes both the crisis of envious disunity before the murder and the peaceful harmony after the violent expulsion. All violence and resentment between the members of the group are transferred to this deified victim, who becomes the embodiment of violence itself. Thereafter, divine revenge protects the community from another mimetic crisis. "Violence will come to an end only after it has had the last word and that word has been accepted as

32. René Girard, *Job: The Victim of His People*, tr. by Y. Freccero (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 51. Cf. also René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*, tr. by Y. Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp. 11-14; and René Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991).

33. Girard, *Theater*, *op. cit.*, p. 186; and *Things*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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divine."[34] Divine vengeance is at the core of every archaic religious system.

Girard's main example from Greek mythology to demonstrate the origin of archaic culture in the scapegoat mechanism is the Oedipus myth,[35] to which Hesiod refers to explain how the gods will punish those who violate the order of the *nomos*.[36] The disclosure of the scapegoat mechanism exposes not only how "mythical violence" constitutes the root of the archaic *nomos*, but also helps to decipher Nemesis and all her allies representing divine vengeance.[37] The envy of the gods represents a transfiguration of the collective violence of the lynch mob against its scapegoat.[38] The social envy of the persecutors is masked by the revengeful and terrifying gods.[39] In Aeschylus' tragedy, *Agamemnon*, the hero hints at the close affinity between "Heaven's jealous eye" and the "mighty power" of a "people's voice."[40] The goddess Nemesis is part of that broader metamorphosis. Some ancient images of Nemesis bear clear traces of her origin in the scapegoat mechanism. She is often identified with the wheel of fortune that determines the cyclical and ritual killing of the sacred king: a royal scapegoat.[41] Francis Bacon refers most explicitly to Nemesis'social origin in a scapegoat event. He describes how her crown is given to her by the envious mob, who always rejoice at the bad fate of the powerful or lucky people.

From the perspective of mimetic theory, Hesiod's economic theology represents a world in which economic competition flourishes as long as the people remain inside the narrow boundaries of a rural *nomos* strongly protected by their belief in powerful and revengeful gods, who severely punish every transgression. Myths closely related to this world stress how it differs

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34. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, tr. by P. Gregory (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 135. Cf. pp. 307-308; René Girard, *Things*, *op. cit.*, p. 76; *Job*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

35. Girard, *Violence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-88.

36. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 238-246.

37. According to Girard, *Violence*, *op. cit.*, p. 24, there is "no real difference" between the "principle of justice and the concept of revenge."

38. Cf. Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "Le signe et l'envie," in J.-P. Dupuy/P. Dumochel, *L'enfer*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31; Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-30, 122, 125, 130, 142-143, 152; Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*, 10th ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 209.

39. Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, p. 53. Cf. André Orléan, "The Origin of Money," in *Understanding Origins: Contemporary Views on the Origin of Life, Mind and Society*, edited by F. J. Varela and J.-P. Dupuy (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), p. 136.

40. Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 938, 947. Cf. 456-474.

41. Cf. Robert v. Ranke-Graves, *Griechische Mythologie: Quellen und Deutung*, tr. by H. Seinfeld and B. v. Borresholm (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlts Enzyklopädie, 1984), pp. 110-112; Girard, *Violence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

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from the contemporary world. Whoever tries to become rich or successful, regardless of any natural needs or social moderation, will be punished by envious gods. In this world, monetary competition for richness would be conceivable only as a hubristic crime deserving death. Because Polycrates was too successful in his life, he fell prey to the envy of the gods.[42] When the gods did not accept the ring that he sacrificed to balance his good fortune, his life was lost. Erysichthon, an even more interesting example, is condemned to insatiable hunger when he fells a tree in Demeter's holy grove to build a prestigious new hall.[43] In the end, the punishment of Demeter (or Nemesis, as she is sometimes called) makes him eat himself.

Aeschylus' Political Theology

If the mythic sources of the economic can be found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where a divine *nomos* appears to contain envy like a self-organizing system, like an order governed by an "invisible hand," the mythic sources of the political can be found in Aeschylus' tragedy, *Eumenides*. Turning to Aeschylus means leaving the countryside and entering the Greek *polis*, where the functioning of the political order tames internal rivalries. The roots of the political that significantly influenced the history of the Western World and that are most clearly visible in Schmitt's work can be found in *Eumenides*.[44]

Like Hesiod, Aeschylus mentions a benign *eris* that should flourish in the city. Deadly violence between gods and between human beings must give way to friendly relations. Athena establishes a new relation between the revengeful Erinyes hunting Orestes and herself. Thereafter, a benevolent emulation between herself and the Furies, who have become good goddesses (Eumenides), should substitute for destructive vengeance. "Our rivalry [*eris*] in doing good is victorious forever."[45]

This flourishing of good *eris* relies on a political order that is not really detached from revenge. Aeschylus describes the overcoming of a

42. Herodotus *Histories* 3.40-43. Cf. A. Orléan, "Origin," *op. cit.*, pp. 135-138; L. Zoja, *Growth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

43. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.738-884. Cf. Hans Christoph Binswanger, *Die Glaubensgemeinschaft der Ökonomen: Essays zur Kultur der Wirtschaft* (München: Gerling Akademie Verlag, 1998), pp. 11-46.

44. Cf. Schmitt, *Concept of the Political*, *op. cit.*; Christian Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, tr. by D. McLintock (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 82-139 ("The *Eumenides* of Aeschylus and the Rise of the Political"); Wolfgang Palaver, *Die mythischen Quellen des Politischen: Carl Schmitts Freund-Feind-Theorie* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1998), pp. 36-37.

45. Aeschylus *Eumenides* 974-975

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violent system of blood feud by a less violent legal system. The revengeful and violent Erinyes are transformed into the gentle and fruitful Eumenides, whereby it appears that violence has disappeared from the city. But this is only superficially true. Open violence, in the sense of revenge, has been transformed into a form of structural violence that helps to create peace inside the city, but which can be used against foreign enemies and internal trouble-makers at any time. Aeschylus' solution remains paradoxical, because it is, like Hesiod's *nomos,* a containing of violence through violence.

The political restraining of internal violence in Aeschylus' tragedy resembles the goddess Nemesis keeping the bad Eris in check.[46] The pacified Eumenides promise that common love *and* unanimous hatred will overcome civil war: "I pray that discord, greedy for evil, may never clamor in this city, and may the dust not drink the black blood of its people and through passion cause ruinous murder for vengeance to the destruction of the state. But may they return joy for joy in a spirit of common love, and may they hate with one mind; for this is the cure of many an evil in the world."[47] Civil war must be overcome by enmity to the outside world. Athena recommends friend-enemy relations externally as an antidote to civil war internally: "So do not cast on my realm keen incentives to bloodshed, harmful to young hearts, maddening them with a fury not of wine; and do not, as if taking the heart out of fighting cocks, plant in my people the spirit of tribal war and boldness against each other. Let their war be with foreign enemies, and without stint for one in whom there will be a terrible passion for glory; but I say there will be no battling of birds within the home."[48]

According to Girard, *Eumenides* represents the political as an offspring of the scapegoat mechanism.[49] What was originally laid on the scapegoat is now channeled outside the city. The necessary link between the political and the scapegoat mechanism is found in rituals.[50] The political builds on the ritual channeling of internal violence toward the external world. Whereas in the scapegoat mechanism a member of the group is killed, rituals tend to sacrifice foreigners. The political prolongs the ritual focus on the foreigner, and takes a friend-enemy relation between two different groups as the given starting point. "Everything said by Aeschylus

46. Frye, *Anatomy, op. cit.*, p. 209.
47. Aeschylus *Eumenides* 977-987.
48. *Ibid.*, 858-866.
49. Girard, *Job, op. cit.*, pp. 146-153. Cf. W. Palaver, *Quellen, op. cit.*, pp. 38-45.
50. Girard, *Violence, op. cit.*, pp. 249, 278-280.

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presupposes the selection of a scapegoat, even an arbitrary scapegoat, but neither his work nor that of the Greeks in general ever mentions it directly. A scapegoat is essential to the system's functioning, but it is a question not of the scapegoat himself, but of a system based on a scapegoat."[51]

Eumenides describes the shift from an archaic world, ruled by a system of blood feud still close to the origin of culture in a founding murder, to a world in which an established political order restrains internal violence. The older gods — the revengeful Erinyes — represent the first type of order; Athena, the second. Where Athena explains the future tasks of the Eumenides and of herself, it is they who must expel internal troublemakers, whereas she must provide success in foreign wars:

> But more and more root out the impious,
> For as a gardener fosters what he sows,
> So foster I this race, whom righteousness
> Doth fend from sorrow.
> Such the proffered boon.
> But I, if wars must be, and their loud clash
> And carnage, for my town, will ne'er endure
> That aught but victory shall crown her fame.[52]

Aeschylus' political is not a result of human reasoning, but is given by the gods, which means that it is rooted in pagan religion. Somewhat similar to Hesiod's economic theology, Aeschylus represents an archaic form of *political theology*, and there are obvious parallels between them. Like Hesiod's twofold goddess Eris, and the ambiguous relation between Nemesis and her sister Eris, Aeschylus' gods are highly ambivalent. The Erinyes, like their sisters Eris and Nemesis, can be either benevolent Eumenides or malevolent Furies, depending on the circumstances. The ambiguous nature of Aeschylus' theology can also be seen in the antagonism between Apollo or Athena and the Erinyes. The "old *dikè* of the Erinyes and the contrasting *dikè* of the new gods such as Apollo" form a harmony of opposing forces.[53] Again, this political theology resembles closely the paradoxical logic of Heraclitus' philosophy.[54] Like Hesiod's

51. Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
52. Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, tr. by E.D.A. Morshead (New York: Heritage Press, 1961), pp. 910-915.
53. Vernant/P. Vidal-Naquet, *Myth*, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-419; Vernant, "Tragedy," *op. cit.*, pp. 290-291. Cf. Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, pp. 476, 511, 539, 550, 554-564, 615-619.
54. Palaver, *Quellen*, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

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economic theology, its logic may be characterized as a "*concordia discors*."[55] Both theologies are offspring of the scapegoat mechanism and participate in the paradoxical logic of the primitive sacred.[56]

However, there is also a difference between Hesiod's economic theology and Aeschylus' political theology. To a degree, a political order helps to detach human culture from its immediate religious roots. The gods can withdraw into heaven and entrust men with the responsibility for the world.[57] This political order is not secular, because it still depends on the gods, but it is characterized by the sacred frenzy of the scapegoat mechanism to a lesser degree. Prolonging the work of the ritual, the political order moves away from the founding murder and blurs the traces of its violent origin. What started as enmity inside a community, culminating in the killing of a monstrous being who is both good and bad, ends in a political order that differentiates clearly between friends inside and enemies outside. Whereas the most primitive gods closest to the violent origin are always ambivalent, the gods of a more evolved culture may become good and gentle.[58] The Erinyes can change into Eumenides as soon as a political order is constituted. The political order fulfills the role of Nemesis typical of a more primitive stage of religious development. Structurally, however, both economic theology and political theology draw on social modes of mimetic desire to keep envious mimesis in check.

Aristotle' s Philosophy of Nemesis

To understand how the archaic balancing of mimesis and nemesis influenced Western thinking, it is useful to focus on Aristotle's distinction between emulation and envy, which relies on the transformation of both economic and political theology into a philosophical concept. According to Aristotle, envy is a painful emotion that can be felt if equals have good fortune,[59] and he sees it as intrinsically evil.[60] But emulation is a good emotion: "Emulation is a feeling of pain at the evident presence of highly valued goods, which are possible for us to obtain, in the possession of

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55. Karl Reinhardt, *Aischylos als Regisseur und Theologe* (Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1949), pp. 22, 69-72, 122, 154-162.

56. Girard, *Violence*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38, 257-258; *Things*, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

57. Reinhardt, *Aischylos*, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

58. René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, tr. by Y. Freccero (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 76-94.

59. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1387b.

60. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 870c; Alisdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 121.

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those who naturally resemble us — pain not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not. Emulation therefore is virtuous and characteristic of virtuous men, whereas envy is base and characteristic of base men; for the one owing to emulation, fits himself to obtain such goods, while the object of the other, owing to envy, is to prevent his neighbor possessing them."[61] Aristotle's neat separation of bad envy and good emulation relies again on certain prerequisites that must not be overlooked. Close to Hesiod, he is not in favor of emulative competition in the modern sense. He treats trade and monetary economy, with their tendency to limitless growth, negatively, whereas economy in the positive sense is closely linked to natural needs and their limits.[62] In Aristotle's eyes, every kind of limitless pursuit of profit (*pleonexia*) is unjust.[63] Aristotle's friend-enemy distinction between Greeks and Barbarians is close to Aeschylus' political theology.[64] This enmity against the outside world helps to keep internal conflicts in check. Aristotle even strengthens this concept of the political by viewing Barbarians not only as enemies, but also as natural slaves. In his eyes, Greeks occupy a superior position inside as well as outside Greek culture.

Even Nemesis is an important prerequisite for Aristotle's distinction between emulation and envy.[65] But she is no longer the same goddess that she is in Hesiod's poem. Similar to Plato's philosophy, Aristotle's philosophy is part of a theological development that purified all gods of human evil. Plato and Aristotle no longer can imagine that gods are envious.[66] But this purification of the gods does not mean that Nemesis has disappeared completely. The archaic concept of the envy of the gods is transformed into divine anger. These gods of the philosophers are essentially good, and use

61. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1388a. Cf. Plato, *Laws* 730e-731b.

62. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1381a; *Politics* 1256a-1259a. Cf. Plato *Laws* 870a; Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, For. by R. M. MacIver (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 53-54.

63. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1129b-1130a.

64. Aristotle *Politics* 1252b, 1256b, 1327b. Cf. Plato *Republic* 469b-471c; C. Schmitt, *Concept*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29; Reinhart Koselleck, "Zur historisch-politischen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe," in *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, 3rd edition (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), pp. 219-220; Christian Meier, "Gleichheit und Grenzen: Aristoteles, die Griechen, die Barbaren, die Sklaven," in *Merkur* 49 (1995), pp. 825-835.

65. Cf. Jean-Louis Vullierme, "La juste vengeance d'Aristote et l'économie libérale," in *La Vengeance: Etudes d'étnologie, d'histoire et de philosophie. Vol. 4: La vengeance dans la pensée occidentale*, ed. by Gérard Courtois (Paris: Editions Cujas, 1984), pp. 184-189.

66. Plato *Phaedrus* 246d, *Timaeus* 29e; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 982b-983a. Cf. Hans Kelsen, *Vergeltung und Kausalität* (Wien: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1982), pp. 486-487.

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their violence only to avenge the misdeeds of evildoers. Nemesis is now part of a divine justice — purified of evil passions typical of human beings.[67] Analogous to divine anger punishing evildoers, Aristotle justifies indignation (*nemesis*) as a human emotion directed against those who do not deserve their good fortune. Like his separation of envy and emulation, Aristotle also distinguishes indignation from envy: "What is called indignation is the antithesis to pity; for the being pained at undeserved good fortune is a manner contrary to being pained at undeserved bad fortune and arises from the same character. And both emotions show good character, for if we sympathize with and pity those who suffer undeservedly, we ought to be indignant with those who prosper undeservedly; for that which happens beyond a man's deserts is unjust, wherefore we attribute this feeling even to gods. It would seem that envy also is similarly opposed to pity, as being akin to or identical with indignation, although it is really different; envy also is indeed a disturbing pain and directed against good fortune, but not that of one who does not deserve it, but of one who is our equal and like."[68]

On the surface, Aristotle's solution seems perfect. A political order based on the distinction between friends and enemies, and on righteous indignation enables a clear-cut separation of envy and emulation. No ambiguity seems to remain. Aristotle's philosophy looks like a perfect example of an unproblematic primacy of the political keeping economic competition in check. But a closer look reveals that it is still violence that restrains all envious rivalries.[69] Structural violence in the form of friend-enemy relations and in the form of a slave-owning society hints at the ambiguous nature of Aristotle's political philosophy. His justification of indignation resembles even more playing with fire. He gives in to the forces of collective envy, which are always at the root of human justice. Benjamin made the ambivalent and violent nature of human anger explicit, and added that it is necessary to go back to ancient myths to criticize this specific manifestation of violence.[70]

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67. Plato *Laws* 716a-717d; *Republic* 451a; *Phaedrus* 248c; Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1386b. Cf. Plato *Laws* 728c; E. Peterich, *Theologie*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

68. Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1386. Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1108b, 1125b; Plato *Laws* 731b-d; *Republic* 375b-375d.

69. Andrew J. McKenna, "Aristotle's Theater of Envy: Paradox, Logic, and Literature," in T. Yamamoto, ed., *Philosophical Designs for a Socio-Cultural Transformation: Beyond Violence and the Modern Era*, (Boulder, Co.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), pp. 632-654. On the mimetic and violent dimension of "indignation," see Girard, *Things*, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

70. Benjamin, "Critique," *op. cit.*, pp. 294-295.

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Girard's mimetic theory is a suitable tool to undertake Benjamin's recommendation. From the perspective of mimetic theory, Aristotle's philosophy remains within the realm of the scapegoat mechanism. Due to its connection with a theology of divine anger, however, it comes closer to the truth than its mythical ancestors. The philosophy of *nemesis* returns some of the responsibility for evil and disorder in the world to men, without, however, being able to leave the representation of persecution altogether.[71]

Mimesis and Nemesis at the Dawn of Modernity: Hobbes and Rousseau

It might be said that Aristotle's distinction between good emulation and bad envy has been valid until today. But the modern age has blurred Aristotle's traditional differentiation, because many of the prerequisites that enabled Aristotle to sustain his separation of emulation and envy have been undermined. A world confined within narrow local boundaries, based on traditional forms of economy such as agriculture and craft, has become a globalizing world based on monetary economy and international trade; a world based on hierararchy has become a world based on equality.

Shakespeare was one of the first authors to recognize that the modern age was blurring the distinction between emulation and envy.[72] Ulysses' famous speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida* attributes the confusion of envy and emulation to the breakdown of traditional forms of social differentiation. Without degree, justice is no longer possible, and desire becomes limitless and destructive:

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark what discord follows. . . .
> Force should be right — or rather, right and wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite,
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey, And last eat up himself. . . .

71. Girard, *Scapegoat*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

72. Kenneth Palmer, "Introduction," in William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 78-79; R. Girard, *Theater*, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-166.

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so every step, Exampled by the first pace that is sick
Of his superior, grows to an envious fever
Of pale and bloodless emulation.[73]

What Shakespeare observed early on also became increasingly visible in the major works of political philosophy at the onset of modernity. Hobbes, Spinoza, Mandeville, Rousseau, and Kant no longer were abiding by the traditional distinction between envy and emulation. Both concepts merged into one inseparable, ambivalent emotion (closely resembling Girard's mimetic desire) capable of causing prosperity as well as destruction. In *Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville calls envy a "minister of industry"; in his *Ethics*, Spinoza identifies envy and emulation; and Kant uses the expression "enviously competitive vanity" to describe the motivating force causing prosperity.[74] But perhaps most instructive are the examples of Hobbes and Rousseau.

At first glance, Hobbes appears to be following Aristotle's traditional distinction in his intensive study of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "*Griefe*, for the success of a Competitor in wealth, honour, or other good, if it be joyned with Endeavour to enforce our own abilities to equal or exceed him, is called *emulation*: But joyned with Endeavour to supplant, or hinder a Competitor, *envy*."[75] A closer look reveals that Hobbes significantly parts company with Aristotle. Despite his verbal distinction between envy and emulation, Hobbes does not follow Aristotle's moral differentiation between envy and emulation. In his view, emulation is no longer nobler than envy.[76] He compares the mimetic desire — emulation and envy — that is ruling human life to a race in which everyone tries to be "foremost."[77] Envious competition leads to war, if there is no political power to check human emulation, and that is the task of Hobbes' absolutist state.

Unlike Aristotle, Hobbes had to rely more on the political to restrain competition. The inseparability of envy and emulation increased the

73. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, I.iii.

74. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by H. Reiss, tr. by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 45.

75. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. by R. Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), chap. 6., p. 44; and *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, ed. with an Introduction by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), I.IX.12, p. 54.

76. Leo Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes: Its Basis and Its Genesis*, translated from the German Manuscript by E. M. Sinclair (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 39, 133.

77. Hobbes, *Elements*, I.IX.21, p. 59. Wolfgang Palaver, "Hobbes and the Katéchon: The Secularization of Sacrificial Christianity," in *Contagion* 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 57-59.

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necessity for a strong counterforce. Hobbes' political philosophy is an example of the close relation between the rise of capitalism and the modern nation-state.[78] Hobbes had to rely on nemesis to restrain mimesis. As in Aeschylus' political theology, one of the main tasks of Hobbes' absolutist state is to prevent civil war internally by distinguishing between friends and enemies externally.[79] Hobbes' political philosophy also resembles Hesiod's economic theology and its revengeful deities; it is rooted in a particular theology that is linked essentially to divine revenge. At the heart of Hobbes' theory of the state is fear of God — a "Revenger" of human "perfidy" — that makes his social contract possible.[80]

Despite their differences, Rousseau is close to Hobbes in his treatment of envy, emulation, and the political — at least as long as he is discussing society and not the state of nature. Like Hobbes, Rousseau does not distinguish between envy and emulation. The word he uses to express mimetic desire is *amour-propre*, an emotion defined by the fact that human beings always compare themselves to others.[81] Comparison is the core of both envy and emulation, and leads to benevolent as well as malevolent results. Like Hobbes, Rousseau compares life to a race: "I could explain how much this universal desire for reputation, honours, and advancement, which inflames us all, exercises and holds up to comparison our faculties and powers; how it excites and multiplies our passions, and, by creating universal competition and rivalry, or rather enmity, among men, occasions numberless failures, successes, and disturbances of all kinds by making so many aspirants run the same course. I could show that it is to this desire of being talked about, and this unremitting rage of distinguishing ourselves,

78. Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

79. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *op. cit.*, chap. 13, p. 90; chap. 17, pp. 119-121; chap. 21, p. 150; chap. 25, p. 182; chap. 26, p. 185. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes: Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*, For. and Intro. by G. Schwab, tr. by G. Schwab and E. Hilfstein (Westport: Greenwood, 1996), pp. 21, 47-49.

80. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, *op. cit.*, chap. 14, p. 99. Cf. Wolfgang Palaver, *Politik und Religion bei Thomas Hobbes: Eine Kritik aus der Sicht der Theorie René Girad* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1991), pp. 64-76; and Wolfgang Palaver, "A Girardian Reading of Schmitt's Political Theology," in *Telos* 93 (Fall 1992), pp. 60-61.

81. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality," in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, translation and introduction by G. D. H. Cole, revised and augmented by J.H. Brumfitt and J. C. Hall (London: Dent, 1990), pp. 73, 75, 89-90, 95-96, 112, 116, 120. Cf. Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Popular Sovereignty and the Sacred: A Mimetic Reading of Rousseau's Doctrine of the General Will," in *Paragrana: Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie* 4/2 (1995), p. 240; P. Saint-Amand, *Laws*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

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that we owe the best and the worst things we possess, both our virtues and our vices, our science and our errors, our conquerors and our philosophers; that is to say, a great many bad things, and a very few good ones."[82]

Like Hobbes, Rousseau also must rely on the political to check the destructive forces of mimetic desire, and he too must join *nemesis*. In the eyes of the French philosopher, there is only one way out of the chaos caused by *amour-propre*. Mimetic desire must be transformed into patriotism: "It is certain that the greatest miracles of virtue have been produced by patriotism: this fine and lively feeling, which gives to the force of self-love [*amour-propre*] all the beauty of virtue, lends it an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it the most heroic of all passions."[83] A collective form of mimesis—a "common emulation in all to live and die for their country"— must overcome envy that leads to civil war.[84] This common emulation is linked to the nation-state, and excludes cosmopolitanism as a reliable political concept. In *Emile*, Rousseau claims that one has to "choose between making a man and making a citizen."[85] Thus, patriotism is detached from a universal love of mankind: "All partial societies, when they are tightly knit and well united, are alienated from the larger society. Every patriot acts coldly towards foreigners; they are only men, and nothing to him. This defect is inevitable but of little importance. The essential thing is to be good to the people with whom one lives. Abroad, the Spartan was selfish, grasping, and unjust; yet unselfishness, justice, and harmony ruled within his home. Distrust those cosmopolitans who search far in their books for duties that they neglect to fulfil towards those around them. Such philosophers love the Tartars so as to be spared from loving their neighbours."[86] Rousseau's primacy of the political also relies on the use of a public distinction between friends and enemies to create internal peace.[87] His distinction between the general will *(volonté générale)* and the will of all *(volonté de tous)* makes explicit that patriotism is based on a common national enemy — at the deeper roots of this logic, a common

82. Rousseau, "Discourse," *op. cit.*, p. 112.

83. Rousseau, "Political Economy," in *Social Contract*, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Cf. P. Saint-Amand, *Laws*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 98-99, 169.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

85. Rousseau, *Emile*, book I.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Rousseau, "The Social Contract," in *Social Contract*, *op. cit.*, I.4, pp. 187-188; II.3, p. 203, II.5, p. 209. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien, Nachdruck der 1963 erschienen Auflage (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987), p. 120; and Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre*, 8th edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993), p. 214; Carl Schmitt, *Nomos der Erde*, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-123.

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scapegoat.[88] Rousseau quotes the Marquis d'Argenson to illustrate how people can be fused into a political unity: "The agreement of two particular interests is formed by opposition to a third."[89] This simple formula expresses not only Rousseau's view of the political, but manifests how national politics developed in the 19th and 20th centuries.[90]

Finally, like Hobbes, Rousseau also searched for some religious support for his political taming of society. In the chapter on "Civil religion" in his *Social Contract*, he seeks to find a third way between the pagan religion of the citizen and the religion of the Gospel.[91] Whereas the former is supportive of patriotism, although it is founded on lies, is intolerant and leads to wars, the second is true, although it is apolitical and destroys patriotic feelings. The religion of the Gospel contradicts the social spirit. Rousseau was in search of a type of religion that is not too cruel and prone to war, but one that is violent enough to foster the political. He proposed a civil religion that consists of few simple dogmas, and a careful look at these dogmas reveals that he attempts to link his political theory to a religion rooted in divine vengeance. The outlawing of intolerance does not contradict this interpretation; it only softens his concept of vengeance. "The existence of a mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity, possessed of foresight and providence, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws: these are its positive dogmas. Its negative dogmas I confine to one, intolerance."[92]

Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand" and Nemesis

Usually, Hobbes and Rousseau are considered representatives of the primacy of the political. But what about Adam Smith, who is often called the founding father of economic liberalism? Smith does not fit easily into this tradition of thinkers. He reacted quite harshly to Hobbes, Mandeville, and, without mentioning him explicitly, also Rousseau.[93] In *Fable of the Bees,* Mandeville says that "private vices" lead to "public benefits." Smith could not agree, because it would "take away altogether the distinction

88. Hamerton-Kelly, "Sovereignty," *op. cit.*, pp. 239-242.
89. Rousseau, "The Social Contract," *op. cit.*, II.3, p. 203.
90. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, reprint 1990), pp. 77-78.
91. Rousseau, "The Social Contract," *op. cit.*, IV.8, pp. 298-308.
92. *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.
93. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1984), pp. 308-313 (VII.ii.4), 315 (VII.iii.1), 318-319 (VII.iii.2).

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between vice and virtue."[94] He was closer to Aristotle and the traditional separation between envy and emulation. The most obvious passage in which Smith separates envy and emulation in the traditional sense is where he claims that there should be no envy between nations in regard to those goods that improve the life of mankind as such (the increase of commerce, the proficiency in all the liberal arts and sciences, etc.): "These are all proper objects of national emulation, not of national prejudice or envy."[95] Smith often treats emulation as a benevolent and important emotion that contributes to the perfection of the world,[96] whereas envy belongs to those emotions "which drive men from one another, and which tend, as it were, to break the bands of human society."[97] But this neat separation of emulation and envy is only apparent. A closer look at Smith's work reveals that he too succumbed to the paradoxical logic of mimetic desire.[98]

At the core of Smith's moral philosophy is "sympathy," an emotion he distinguishes from Hobbes' and Mandeville's egoistic vanity.[99] From a mimetic perspective, sympathy is but mimetic desire: it means that emotions are influenced mutually. Smith defines sympathy as our "fellow-feeling with any passion whatever."[100] Like mimetic desire, sympathy may lead to benevolent or malevolent consequences. In regard to the negative consequences of sympathy, Smith is far closer to Hobbes and Mandeville than he admitted. He explicitly maintains that vanity is the source of the emulation that compels the betterment of human conditions.[101] But, due to this vanity, sympathy leads humans to prefer wealth over virtue. In a chapter added to *Theory of Moral Sentiments* before his death, Smith concluded that the vain preference for wealth destroyed human morality: "Of the corruption of our moral sentiments, which is occasioned by this disposition to admire the rich and the great, and to despise or neglect persons of poor and

94. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 308 (VII.ii.4).
95. *Ibid.*, p. 229 (VI.ii.2).
96. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by R. H. Campbell, A. S. Skinner; textual editor W. B. Todd (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), pp. 157 (I.x.c), 759-760, 763, 780 (V.i.f).
97. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 243 (VI.iii).
98. Cf. Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "Shaking the Invisible Hand," in *Disorder and Order: Proceedings of the Stanford International Symposium (Sept. 14-16, 1981)*, ed. by P. Livingston (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1984), pp. 132-136; Jean-Pierre Dupuy, "The Self-Deconstruction of the Liberal Order," in *Contagion* Vol. 2 (Spring 1995), pp. 6-10; Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *Liberalisme et justice sociale: Le sacrifice et l'envie* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1997), pp. 75-106 ("Adam Smith et la sympathie envieuse").
99. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 317 (VII.iii.1).
100. *Ibid.*, p. 10 (I.i.1).
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51 (I.iii.2).

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mean condition."[102] Emulation can lead either to the destruction of morality or to virtue and justice. However, the great majority of people choose the former, because they are "worshippers of wealth and greatness."[103]

Despite his neat separation between bad envy and good emulation, Smith, like Hobbes and Mandeville, had to admit that emulation in real life ends up as a moral vice and is not really distinct from envy. His famous metaphor of the "invisible hand" expresses the mysterious transformation of vain self-love into public profits.[104] However, it would be wrong to think that Smith viewed envy as such or every unrestrained form of emulation as capable of producing public wealth. Like Hobbes and Rousseau, he was aware that competition must be kept within certain boundaries. He was not a representative of unrestrained competition: "In the race for wealth, and honors, and preferments, he may run as hard as he can, and strain every nerve and every muscle, in order to outstrip all his competitors. But if he should justle, or throw down any of them, the indulgence of the spectators is entirely at an end. It is a violation of fair play, which they cannot admit of. . . . They readily, therefore, sympathize with the natural resentment of the injured, and the offender becomes the object of their hatred and indignation."[105]

According to Smith, no individual is allowed to prefer himself over the other, "to hurt or injure that other, in order to benefit himself, though the benefit to the one should be much greater than the hurt or injury to the other."[106] Whoever violates this "sacred rule" will "render himself the proper object of the contempt and indignation of mankind; as well as of the punishment which that contempt and indignation must naturally dispose them to inflict." Competition must be contained within a moral order based on justice, and this justice stems from emotions like indignation or resentment. "Resentment . . . is the safeguard of justice and the security of innocence."[107] Obviously, Smith's understanding of justice refers back to the goddess Nemesis. His frequent use of terms like "indignation" and "resentment" links his concept closely to Aristotle's understanding of *nemesis*.[108] However, whereas in the case of Hesiod and Aristotle mimetic theory discloses the deeper roots of nemesis in social envy,

102. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-66 (I.iii.3).
103. *Ibid.*, p. 62 (I.iii.3).
104. *Ibid.*, p. 184 (IV.1); *Wealth of Nations*, *op. cit.*, p. 456 (IV.ii).
105. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 83 (II.ii.2).
106. *Ibid.*, p. 138 (III.3).
107. *Ibid.*, p. 79 (II.ii.1).
108. Vullierme, "La justice vengeance," *op. cit.*, pp. 189-196.

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Smith's treatment of indignation and resentment refers directly to the origin of nemesis in mimetic desire or sympathy: "When we see one man oppressed or injured by another, the sympathy which we feel with the distress of the sufferer seems to serve only to animate our fellow-feeling with his resentment against the offender. We are rejoiced to see him attack his adversary in his turn, and are eager and ready to assist him whenever he exerts himself for defence, or even for vengeance within a certain degree."[109] In one passage, Smith even refers to envy as the source of indignation. Despite his negative view of envy in general, he not only claims that an excess of envy is very dangerous, but also the lack of it: "The want of proper indignation is a most essential defect in the manly character, and, upon many occasions, renders a man incapable of protecting either himself or his friends from insult and injustice."[110] Smith's "invisible hand" seems linked to a type of envy that causes indignation, and that, by creating justice, keeps bad envy and good emulation separate. Structurally, the pattern resembles the auto-poetic functioning of the scapegoat mechanism, in which mimetic desire is kept in check by the mimetic forces of the mob. Smith's moral philosophy has a close affinity to the "invisible hand" evident in Hesiod's economic theology.

Keeping competition confined within the boundaries of justice and fairness results in the primacy of the political that is clearly visible in Smith's work.[111] He is a true representative of a "*political* economy."[112] Despite his reputation of representing economic liberalism, by putting all his trust in the "invisible hand," he emphasizes the necessity of the state to guarantee an order of justice. Unrestrained competition must remain within the bounds of the law.[113] There are three duties the state must fulfill: "First, the duty of protecting the society from violence and invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting . . . every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice; and, thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions which it can never be for the interest of any individual, or small number of individuals, to erect and

109. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71 (II.i.2).
110. *Ibid.*, p. 243 (VI.iii).
111. Polanyi, *Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112; Arnold Meyer-Faje and Peter Ulrich, eds., *Der andere Adam Smith: Beiträge zur Neubestimmung von Ökonomie als Politischer Ökonomie* (Bern: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1991).
112. Smith, *Wealth*, *op. cit.*, p. 428 (IV. Introduction).
113. *Ibid.*, p. 910 (V.iii).

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maintain."[114] One of the more important tasks of the state in a society based on property is the protection of the owners of properties against the envy of poor people: "Envy, malice, or resentment are the only passions which can prompt one man to injure another in his person or reputation. . . . The affluence of the rich excites the indignation of the poor, who are often both driven by want, and prompted by envy, to invade his possessions. It is only under the shelter of the civil magistrate that the owner of that valuable property . . . can sleep a single night in security."[115]

Smith's concept of the state also succumbs to the ambiguity of the political. As with Hobbes and Rousseau, his state overcomes internal rivalry with the help of an external enemy. At first glance, he seems to be a representative of the thesis that the economy leads to peace, and that only mercantilism and monopoly are responsible for causing envy between the nations: "Commerce, which ought naturally to be, among nations, as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity."[116] He asserts that it is the "impertinent jealousy of merchants and manufacturers" that lead to national animosities.[117] But is this national animosity caused by the monopolists really distinguishable from friend-enemy relations connected to all traditional forms of the political? Smith says that free trade must be restricted in all those cases that are connected with the defense of one's own country. For this reason, he was in favor of the Navigation Acts (1651–1849) that protected British trade against the Dutch. Because of their contribution to the defense of the country, Smith called them "the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England."[118] He asked rhetorically if these acts were not the product of such national animosities usually produced by jeaoulous monopolists, and, in attempting to answer this question, he distinguished between national animosities and security measures.[119] But he had to admit, if only indirectly, that it was not always possible to distinguish clearly between them.

The problem proved to be even more complicated. In the passage where he accuses mercantilism of causing national animosities, Smith observes that neighboring countries always tend toward enmity, and that

114. *Ibid.*, pp. 687-688 (IV.ix).
115. *Ibid.*, pp. 709-710 (V.i.b).
116. *Ibid.*, p. 493 (IV.iii.c).
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*, p. 465 (IV.ii).
119. *Ibid.*, p. 464 (IV.ii).

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monopolists just increase this tendency. As an example, he refers to the relation between France and England: "Being neighbors, they are necessarily enemies, and the wealth and power of each becomes, upon that account, more formidable to the other; and what would increase the advantage of national friendship serves only to inflame the violence of national animosity."[120] In *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith elaborates by stating that neighboring nations tend toward enmity. Love of one's own country and envy of the neighbor are closely linked. It "often disposes us to view, with the most malignant jealousy and envy, the prosperity and aggrandizement of any other neighboring nation."[121]

Smith was an observer of a phenomenon Sigmund Freud later called the "narcissism of minor difference." Not the difference between civilizations leads to enmity, but close proximity: "National prejudices and hatreds seldom extend beyond neighboring nations."[122] This "narcissism of minor difference" is closely linked to Aeschylus' political theology. It is the overcoming of internal rivalry with the help of external enmity. Civil war gives way to the possibility of foreign wars. Though Smith claims that "foreign war and civil faction are the two situations which afford the most splendid opportunities for the display of public spirit," he immediately adds that "the glory which is acquired by foreign war is . . . almost always more pure and more splendid than that which can be acquired in civil faction."[123]

Smith's political concept is not detached from all theological considerations. The love of one's country, with its tendency to envy and enmity, does not derive "from the love of mankind."[124] These two sentiments are independent of one another. "We do not love our country merely as a part of the great society of mankind: we love it for its own sake, and independently of any such consideration."[125] Ultimately, the divine creator seems to have established this independent love to the benefit of all mankind: "That wisdom which contrived the system of human affections, as well as that of every other part of nature, seems to have judged that the interest of the great society of mankind would be best promoted by directing the principal attention of each individual to that particular portion of it, which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and of his understanding."[126]

120. *Ibid.*, p. 496 (IV.iii.c).
121. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 228 (VI.ii.2).
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230 (VI.ii.2).
123. *Ibid.*, pp. 232 (VI.ii.2).
124. *Ibid.*, pp. 229 (VI.ii.2).
125. *Ibid.*
126. *Ibid.*

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A growing number of authors have attempted to uncover the theological foundations of Smith's thinking. However, since Rüstow's focus on Smith's "economic theology," it has become more explicit that Smith's theology is far closer to Stoicism than to Biblical thinking. Smith has many references to Stoicism.[127] Even his idea of the "invisible hand" seems to derive from Stoic thinking: "The ancient stoics were of the opinion, that as the world was governed by the all-ruling providence of a wise, powerful, and good God, every single event ought to be regarded, as making a necessary part of the plan of the universe, and as tending to promote the general order and happiness of the whole: that the vices and follies of mankind, therefore, made as necessary a part of this plan as their wisdom or their virtue; and by that eternal art which educes good from ill, were made to tend equally to the prosperity and perfection of the great system of nature."[128]

Smith's theology seems to have its origin in paganism, with a foundation in the scapegoat mechanism. He refers to pagan religion, and explains that pagan superstition ascribed human passions like envy or indignation to the gods. Like human beings, their gods love "virtue and beneficence" and abhor "vice and injustice."[129] The pagan gods were "believed to be the rewarders of humanity and mercy, and the avengers of perfidy and injustice."[130] The "terrors of religion" were enforcing the natural sense of moral duty.[131] Smith's own religious view is not very different from paganism. According to Smith, the natural morality of paganism was confirmed later by reasoning and philosophical research. His theology is a type of deism, with a strong emphasis on divine revenge. Non-violence or the love of the enemy in the Biblical sense plays no role in Smith's theological considerations. In one passage, he clearly opposes those ideas: "A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still, and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them."[132] Smith's image of god is clearly marked by retribution and revenge: "The idea that, however we may escape the observation of man, or be placed above the reach of human punishment,

127. Rüstow, *Versagen*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-28; Martin Büscher, "Gott und Markt — religionsgeschichtliche Wurzeln Adam Smiths und die 'Invisible Hand' in der säkularisierten Industriegesellschaft," in *Der andere Adam Smith*, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-144; H. C. Binswanger, *Glauben*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-56. Cf. John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 47-48.

128. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 36 (I.ii.3).

129. Smith, *Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 169 (III.5).

130. *Ibid.*, p. 164 (III.5).

131. *Ibid.*

132. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35 (I.ii.3). Cf. p. 178 (III.6).

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yet we are always acting under the eye, and exposed to the punishment of God, the great avenger of injustice, is a motive capable of restraining the most headstrong passions . . ."[133] "The justice of God, however, we think, still requires, that he should hereafter avenge the injuries of the widow and the fatherless, who are here so often insulted with impunity. In every religion, and in every superstition that the world has ever beheld, accordingly, there has been a Tartarus as well as an Elysium; a place provided for the punishment of the wicked, as well as one for the reward of the just."[134]

The Biblical Undermining of the Political: Nemesis and the Father in Heaven

Beginning with the Old Testament, an increasing distance from revenge, retaliation, and, ultimately, from nemesis can be detected.[135] This does not mean that there are no passages in the Bible which resemble Greek thinking connected to the goddess Nemesis, but that key passages indicate a different attitude. Thus, in the *Book of Job*, Job's friends represent righteous indignation in the sense of Nemesis. The best example for this is Zophar's speech about "wickedness" that "receives just retribution."[136] In the eyes of Job's friends, God's wrath will severely punish all evil-doers. However, the *Book of Job* does not side with the perspective of the persecuting friends of Job, but with the victim Job. A similar text can be found in the songs of the Suffering Servant in *Second Isaiah*, where the image of a vengeful God is contrasted with Biblical insight into the human origin of all sufferings laid on God's servant. First, there is a community that identifies suffering with divine punishment: "We accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted."[137] But this community corrects its first sight and recognizes its own responsibility: "He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities."[138] In the New Testament, this perspective of the Old Testament is prolonged and comes to its fulfillment. Jesus's father in heaven differs significantly from the goddess Nemesis and from all philosophical concepts of a vengeful god.[139] The heavenly father, who exhorts to love one's enemies, "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends

133. *Ibid.*, p. 170 (III.5).
134. *Ibid.*, p. 91 (II.ii.3).
135. Raymund Schwager, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation: Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption*, tr. by J. G. Williams and P. Haddon (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999), pp. 16-25.
136. Job 20: 1-29. See Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.
137. Isaiah 53:4
138. Isaiah 53: 5.
139. Girard, *Things*, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-184.

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rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."[140] Whereas in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the evil-doers must be uprooted, in the New Testament gathering the weeds is forbidden, because this also may uproot the wheat.[141]

Emulation and the desire to be the foremost is typical of the best disciples of Jesus,[142] as in the request of James and John: "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."[143] Jesus needs such emulous followers to spread his message. It is thus no surprise that Jesus does not prohibit emulation. In his response, he just reminds his followers of the ultimate goal of their desire: "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink . . .?"[144] It is the reaction of the other ten disciples that reveals the connection between mimesis and nemesis. After Jesus' reply to James and John, they thought now they were allowed to turn against their brothers: "When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John."[145] Their indignation reveals that it was also their desire to occupy the best seats. Jesus' lesson that nemesis is not a Christian option is especially for those other disciples: "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all."[146] This passage clearly demonstrates the difference between Greek paganism and Christianity. Nemesis, the Greek counterforce to keep mimesis in check, is no longer a Christian option: Christians are called upon to redirect their desires, so that they no longer are forced to rely on traditional forms of the political. Love must replace the law of vengeance.

Paul's *Letter to the Romans* emphasizes the substitution of love for vengeance: "Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one

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140. Mathew 5:45.

141. Mathew 13:24-30. See Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

142. René Girard, "Reconciliation, Violence and the Gospel," in *Visible Violence: Sichtbare und verschleierte Gewalt im Film. Beiträge zum Symposium "Film and Modernity: Violence, Sacrifice and Religion," Graz 1997*, ed. by G. Larcher, F. Grabner and Ch. Wessely (Münster: LIT, 1998), pp. 211-215.

143. Cf. Mark 10:37 and Lk 22:24: "A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest." The Greek term *philoneikia* that is used in this passage means "love of victory" and can be identified with Girard's "mimetic desire." See Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 356.

144. Mark 10:38

145. Mark 10:41

146. Mark 10:42-44

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who loves another has fulfilled the law."[147] Christians are called upon to be foremost in the race of love and mutual respect: "Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor."[148] Given their orientation to love, they must leave vengeance to God, which—if read in the context of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount[149] — means that "God gives sinners up to the consequences of their own self-destructive actions:"[150] "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. . . . Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. . . . Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God."[151] A political authority based on the logic of nemesis is not outlawed by Paul, but, as a *katechontic* power, may help to restrain chaos.[152] The state — a civil order based on vengeance[153]— is legitimated as a provisional order for the time being.[154] Ultimately, however, this restraining power must give way to the kingdom of God. Christians are not called upon to work for the conservative undergirding of the vengeful state, but must begin to form communities of mutual love that follow the example of their Lord Jesus Christ.[155]

The Biblical undermining of the political was a slow process. But there

147. Romans 13:8. See Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence: Paul's Hermeneutic of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 150-156.

148. Romans 12:10

149. Mathew 5:33-48

150. *Ibid.*, Hamerton-Kelly, *Violence*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

151. Romans 12:14,17,19.

152. 2 Thess 2:6-7: "And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed." On the concept of the *katechon*, see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. by E. Bethge, tr. by N. H. Smith (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1955), pp. 44-45; C. Schmitt, *Nomos der Erde*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32, 55; Palaver, "Hobbes and the *Katéchon*", *op. cit.*.

153. Rom 13:4-5: The governing authority "is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience."

154. Cf. John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 141, 193-211.

155. Rom 13:11-14: "You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." Cf. J. H. Yoder, *Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 197; Jacob Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus*. Vorträge, gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg 23.-27. Februar 1987 nach Tonbandaufzeichnungen redigierte Fassung von A. Assmann. Edited by A. u. J. Assmann (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1993), pp. 74-75.

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are clear signs that the emergence of the modern world of globalization is linked to this subversion from within. For example, Thomas Aquinas relied heavily on the philosophy of Aristotle. Thus, it is no surprise that he distinguishes between bad envy and good emulation: "Envy differs from zeal. . . . Hence a certain zeal may be good, whereas envy is always evil."[156] But there is one important aspect in which Thomas differs from his Greek predecessor. He criticizes Aristotle's concept of *nemesis* by distinguishing between "eternal goods" and "temporal goods." In the case of eternal goods, envy and indignation are not possible, because eternal goods do not divide people. In the case of temporal goods, it is not allowed to be indignant, because it is up to God alone to punish all misdeeds. But it remains a position in-between archaic myth and the Gospel. Thomas refers to Psalm 73, which displays a positive attitude toward divine revenge and is close to the theology of Job's friends, but does not represent the view of Jesus' heavenly father.[157] His position on nemesis is a type of sacrificial Christianity that is no longer identical with pagan myth, but not yet at the level of the Gospel.[158]

A second example of the Biblical undermining of the political can be found in Shakespeare.[159] *Troilus and Cressida* is one of the first texts that makes explicit the modern blurring of the distinction between envy and emulation. Shakespeare is also an important witness to the Christian undermining of *nemesis*. *Hamlet* is the perfect example of a world too close to Christianity to believe any longer in revenge or righteous indignation.[160] The prince of Denmark is not able to follow the order of

156. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II.36.2. Quoted after the Online Edition of *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*. See Kevin Knight, ed., *http://www.newadvent.org/summa/*. Cf. *ibid.*: "We may grieve over another's good, not because he has it, but because the good which he has, we have not: and this, properly speaking, is zeal, as the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 9). And if this zeal be about virtuous goods, it is praiseworthy, according to 1 Cor. 14:1: 'Be zealous for spiritual gifts': while, if it be about temporal goods, it may be either sinful or sinless."

157. Girard, *Job*, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-59.

158. According to Girard, *Theater*, *op. cit.*, p. 283, in the Middle Ages Gospel principles were reconciled with the aristocratic ethics of personal honor and revenge.

159. In some sense Shakespeare's *Hamlet* shows traces of modern capitalist globalization in regard to time. Hamlet's remark that "the time is out of joint" (I.v) refers to a time when traditional differentiations of time are no longer valid — "the Sunday" is "not divided from the week" and "the night" is made the "joint-laborer with the day" (I.i). These references on time point toward the coming of the modern world, which is according to Catherine Pickstock, "Liturgy and Modernity," in *Telos* No. 113 (Fall 1998), p. 27, characterized by its refusal of a liturgy of time: "People tend to eat at any time; shops are open all night; and every week lacks a Sunday."

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the ghost of his father that longs for vengeance.[161] It was Benjamin who saw a Christian element in *Hamlet*,[162] revealing how the play makes the difference between tragedy and the baroque mourning play explicit: Decisions and revenge in the mythic sense no longer are possible. What Benjamin observed in *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* is today confirmed by the mimetic theory. According to Girard, Hamlet's "dull revenge" points at the "no-man's-land between total revenge and no revenge at all" typical of the modern age.[163]

A third example is Rousseau, who also was aware of the political danger coming from the Gospel. He had to part company with the religion of the Gospel to give his concept of the political (patriotism) a theological legitimation.[164] But Søren Kierkegaard's essay, "The Present Age,"[165] is most instructive. One could already observe in *Hamlet* that the Christian subversion of the legitimacy of revenge does not automatically lead to a more peaceful world. Hamlet's indecision does not lead to harmony, but kills almost all the relevant protagonists.[166] The disaster

160. It is important to note that, according to Frye, *Anatomy*, *op. cit.*, p. 213, nemesis is "deeply involved with the movement of time." The end of all traditional beliefs in revenge is therefore linked to the end of history as the globalized world was called by Kojève and Fukuyama. See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the 'Phenomenology of Spirit.'* Assembled by R. Queneau. Ed. by A. Bloom. Tr. by J. H. Nichols, jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 158-159; Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*. Revised and Expandet Edition. Including the Strauss-Kojève Correspondence. Ed. by V. Gourevitch and M. S. Roth (New York: The Free Press, 1991), p. 166; Alexandre Kojève, "Brief an Carl Schmitt vom 21. Mai 1956," in "Zweimal Kojève," in *Schmittiana: Beiträge zu Leben und Werk Carl Schmitts* Vol. VI, ed. by P. Tommissen (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1998), pp. 118-119. Hamlet's "dull revenge" (IV.iv) stands in-between his friend Horatio's distance from nemesis — "whose blood and judgment" are according to Hamlet "so well commeddled" that he is "not a pipe of Fortune's finger" (III.ii)—and Laertes' unrestrained desire for revenge (IV.v).

161. On nemesis and the ghost of Hamlet's father see Frye, *Anatomy*, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

162. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, tr. by J. Osborne (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 136-138; 157-158; and Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by R. Tiedemann and H. Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), Vol. I.1, pp. 315, 317, 334-335, 402. Cf. Vol. III, pp. 33, 101.

163. Girard, *Theater*, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

164. Rousseau, "Social Contract," *op. cit.*, IV.8, p. 304: The Christianity of the Gospel "having no particular relation to the body politic, leaves the laws in possession of the force they have in themselves without making any addition to it; and thus one of the great bonds that unite society considered in severalty fails to operate. Nay, more, so far from binding the hearts of the citizens to the State, it has the effect of taking them away from all earthly things. I know of nothing more contrary to the social spirit."

165. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age*, tr. by A. Dru (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

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caused by Hamlet's inability to take revenge illustrates what Jesus meant when he said that he has not "come to bring peace, but a sword."[167] Somewhat similar is Kierkegaard's insight into the modern inability to take revenge. Kierkegaard compares passionate ages that are violent, able to make decisions,[168] and have a connection to the scapegoat mechanism, with the present age, which is characterized by a form of envy that became a "negative unifying principle."[169] The envy of the present age springs from reflection (characterized by imitation of others) and makes every decisive violent deed impossible.[170] Kierkegaard calls the establishment of this modern type of envy a "process of levelling."[171] What nemesis or "fate" was in ancient times has become the levelling process in the present age. This levelling process means the rule of an abstract power. Kierkegaard refers to money and to the public to illustrate the modern rule of the abstraction.[172]

Today, Kirkegaard appears as an early prophet of the contemporary importance of money and media. This levelling process is dangerous, because of its tendency to a "deathly silence."[173] As he writes: "Enthusiasm may end in distaste, but levelling is *eo ipso* the destruction of the individual."[174] He perceived the inability of the modern age to take revenge and to uphold traditional forms of the political. The disbelief in revenge results in an abstract universalism, which is a bad form of a pure humanity: "No single individual (I mean no outstanding individual — in the sense of leadership and conceived according to the dialectical category 'fate') will be able to arrest the abstract process of levelling, for it is

166. Frye, *Anatomy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207 and 237.
167. Mathew 10:34.
168. Kierkegaard, *Age*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55: "I was once the witness of a street fight in which three men most shamefully set upon a fourth. The crowd stood and watched them with indignation; expressions of disgust began to enliven the scene; then several of the onlookers set on one of the three assailants and knocked him down and beat him. The avengers had, in fact, applied precisely the same rules as the offenders. . . . I went up to one of the avengers and tried by argument to explain to him how illogical his behavior was; but it seemed quite impossible for him to discuss the question: he could only repeat that such a rascal richly deserves to have three people against him. . . . What I learnt from it was that I had better give up all hope of putting a stop to that scepticism, lest it should turn upon me." Cf. Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), pp. 88-90.
169. Kierkegaard, *Age*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
170. Kierkegaard's notion of "reflection" is a mimetic concept because it means that people get their identity solely by imitating others.
171. Kierkegaard, Age, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
172. *Ibid.*, p. 40: "Money . . . is moreover only representative, an abstraction."
173. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
174. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

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negatively something higher, and the age of chivalry is gone. No society or association can arrest that abstract power, simply because an association is itself in the service of the levelling process. Not even the individuality of the different nationalities can arrest it, for on a higher plane the abstract process of levelling is a negative representation of *humanity pure and unalloyed*."[175]

Conclusion

Carl Schmitt was well aware of the dangers attending the process of levelling. His concept of the political is an attempt to revitalize the traditional form of the political linked with the goddess Nemesis. His critique of Benjamin's interpretation of *Hamlet* is a desperate attempt to reverse what Christianity had done to paganism.[176] He identifies *Hamlet* with the barbaric as a myth-making source. Whereas Kierkegaard knew that "the age of the heros" was gone,[177] Schmitt hoped that a new Hercules could create a new *nomos* of the earth.[178] He even succumbed to the ambiguity of the sacred to protect his concept of the political. In response to Hans Blumenberg, a representative of peace based on bureaucratic abstraction, he tried to find a final justification of his concept of the political at the

175. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

176. Carl Schmitt, *Hamlet oder Hekuba: Der Einbruch der Zeit in das Spiel*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1993); English translation: "The Source of the Tragic," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 133-151. Cf. Carl Schmitt, "Brief an Alexandre Kojève vom 11. Mai 1956," in *Schmittiana* VI, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117; David Pan, "Political Aesthetics: Carl Schmitt on Hamlet," *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 153-159.

177. Kierkegaard, *Age*, *op. cit.*, p. 55 [translation altered].

178. Schmitt, "Gespräch über den Neuen Raum," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, *op. cit.*, p. 568. Schmitt's hope for a new Hercules coincides with his sympathy for heroism. In his private note from June 18, 1949, he continues his reference to Hercules, who causes the transition from chaos to cosmos in the following way: "When culture comes, heros come to an end, says Hegel. For us, this culture has become dull. This peace is getting morose for me. Therefore we call for heros. And they come!" See Schmitt, *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947-1951*, ed. by E. v. Medem (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), p. 249. Cf. also p. 236, where Schmitt distinguishes between the "political" and the "barbaric." In his book on Hamlet, he also refers to Hegel's insight that culture puts the heroic age to an end. Schmitt seems to side with the barbaric, as it is a myth-making source. See Schmitt, "Source," *op. cit.*, 148-149. Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, ed. by B. Lakerbrink (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 1970), paragraphs 93, 218, 350, 359. It is important to note in this context that Hamlet recognizes a great difference between himself and "Hercules" (I.ii). Contrary to Schmitt, Kojève also thought that the time of the heros has gone. On May 16, 1955, he wrote in a letter to Schmitt that the end of history also means that there is no more "Alexander." See Kojève, "Brief an Carl Schmitt vom 16. Mai 1956," in *Schmittiana* VI, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

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heart of the Trinity.[179] If there is even enmity between the Father and the Son, enmity between political groups becomes legitimate. Schmitt had to become a believer in an ambivalent God close to the ancient concept of a "*concordia discours*."[180] Despite his identification with Christianity, or more precisely, with Roman Catholicism, his God was not Jesus' heavenly father, who is "light" without any "darkness at all."[181]

Schmitt's concept of the political is still relevant in the modern world. Globalization seems to cause an increase in religious fundamentalism, often consistent with clear friend-enemy distinctions.[182] Similar to Schmitt, Samuel Huntington's political theory is also an attempt to revitalize lost forms of the political. It is no surprise that religion plays an important role in Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*.[183] According to Huntington, all religions — regardless of their universalistic claims — differentiate between believers and unbelievers, between a superior in-group and an inferior out-group.[184] The Biblical overcoming of enmity and its inclusive type of universalism is completely outside his view. But the political taming of the economy with the help of friend-enemy politics seems to be no viable concept for the future. Because of its nature, it is very dangerous if only the technology of modern weapons is taken into account. Furthermore, it is no longer possible to believe in a religion of revenge necessary to sustain a traditional form of the political.

In the *katechontic* shadow of the remainders of the traditional forms of the political, and in the *katechontic* shadow of universalistic abstraction, new forms of the political may develop. Church communities formed by the celebration of the Eucharist may help reorient desires to constitute a new economy. The Eucharist may also provide a new pattern of the political that is not based on exclusion, but on the overcoming of

179. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie II: Die Legende von der Erledigung jeder Politischen Theologie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), pp. 109-126. Cf. Hans Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966), p. 60; Palaver, *Quellen*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-65.

180. Palaver, *Quellen*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

181. 1 John 1:5.

182. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991); Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, translated by A. Braley (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Jean-Marie Guehenno, *The End of the Nation-State*, translated by V. P. Elliott (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

183. Huntington, *Clash*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 95-101.

184. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

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it.[185] At least on the level of Christian churches, there is a possibility to form communities which are neither exclusive, like the ancient polis, nor universalistic in an abstract way typical of global capitalism. In the Eucharist is a form of localized universalism typical of a Church that is a universal unity of local communities.[186] This form of glocalism typical of the Christian Church is not only of theological relevance; it comes close to some of those secular models which try to give a political answer to the new problems attending globalization.[187]

185. Schwager, *Jesus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-229; William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (London: Blackwell Publishers,1998), pp. 203-281; William T. Cavanaugh, "The World in a Wafer: A Geography of the Eucharist as Resistance to Globalization," *Modern Theology* 15 (April 1999), pp. 181-196.

186. James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes.* Forword by S. Moore (New York: The Crossrads Publishing Company, 1998), pp. 178-184 ("The Particular Overcoming of Particularity").

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Repetition and Ethics in Late Foucault

Michael Schwartz

> ". . . the political, ethical, social, and philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries."[1]
>
> "What is at stake, then, is this: How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?"[2]

Normalization and Totalization

By the early 1980s, after more than two decades of producing provocative studies on topics ranging from madness to biopower, Michel Foucault came to the conclusion that modernity is marked by an increasingly efficient integration of normalized individuals into totalizing networks. "Never, I think, in the history of human societies — even in the old Chinese society — has there been such a tricky combination in the same political structures of individualization techniques, and of totalization

1. Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 216.

2. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 46-47.

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processes."[3] There no longer seemed to be a substantial "exterior" to modernity, and traditional political critique was already caught within and could only further the effects of totalizing processes.[4] How to resist modernity was, therefore, a thorny problem. Given his view of modernity and its political limits, Foucault's proposal was to engage in local struggles, which included reinventing oneself so as to go beyond modes of modern individuality. Yet, this presented a challenge: how can the resources to act otherwise be found "within" a totalizing modernity? Foucault's turn to ethics was the first step toward developing such a strategy.

His late work on ethics is concerned with historical repetition. The crucial subtext for this project is Division Two of *Being and Time*, where Heidegger proposes that a special engagement with tradition enables one to go beyond the limits of inauthentic socialization. This focus on ethics is best taken as a complement to his earlier studies. In an increasingly totalized world, the folding of past forms of life into present ones is crucial for disconnecting the growth of human capabilities from the intensification of power. Ethical practice, styled as an aesthetics of existence, may, then, be construed as a Foucaultian tactic for denormalizing identity, with the hope of leading toward a more effective political challenge.[5]

According to Foucault, the self-professed radicality of political activities is far more normalized than usually acknowledged, since it is caught within and energizing the totalizing circuits of those very facets of modernity in need to be changed. Yet, Foucault neither turned to negative dialectics nor to deconstruction to combat these totalizing processes (which,

3. Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *op. cit.*, pp. 213, 210, 216 and 224; Foucault, "The Political Technology of Individuals," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. by Luther Martin *et al.* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 161-162; and Foucault, "Politics and Reason," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, ed. by Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 85.

4. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47. See also "Truth, Power, Self: An Interview with Michel Foucault" (October 25, 1982), in *Technologies of the Self*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

5. James W. Bernauer has argued that for Foucault biopower was the force most necessary to resist. See his "Beyond Life and Death: On Foucault's Post-Auschwitz Ethic," in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, ed. by François Ewald, tr. by Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 260ff.; Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Towards an Ethic for Thought* (Atlantic Highland, N.J. and London: Humanities Press, 1990), p. 158ff.; and Bernauer and Michael Mahon, "The Ethics of Michel Foucault," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. by Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 144-145, pp. 151-156. See also Hans Herbert Kögler, *Michel Foucault* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1994), p. 191.

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in his view, preconstitute modes of being in the world and conditions how one speaks, thinks, and acts). Instead, he turned to the historical repetition of practices of self-transformation, seeking to re-empower the ability for effective resistance and change.[6]

The Incommensurability of Frameworks

How, then, does the late work in the history of ethics relate to earlier work in archaeology and genealogy? First, for Foucault there can be no singular framework of investigation. Furthermore, different frameworks are incommensurable with one another.[7] Thus, early on he characterized the modern episteme as regulated by a series of doubles preventing a grasp of the conditions of experience in a synthetic way.[8] Rather than trying to overcome these doubles, he came to accept the irreducible temporality of modernity (what he called "History") and kept inventing ever new strategies of partial analysis. By the early 1980s, he came to regard his work as having developed along multiple axes. Although Foucault is by no means wrong in this self-description, it may help to see his work as divided into two broad phases.[9] Earlier archaeological and genealogical studies tended to explore human beings as objectified, as "constructions" produced by and caught within regimes of power/truth. Later, human

6. When Foucault spoke about the affinities of his work to that of the Frankfurt School on the Enlightenment, he mentioned Horkeimer to the exclusion of Adorno. See Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, tr. by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext[e], 1991), pp. 115-118; and Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, p. 32). This may be regarded as a tacit criticism of negative dialectics and its assumption of the untruth of the (substantive) totality. In addition, Foucault went out of his way to distinguish his projects from that of deconstruction.

7. On incommensurability, see Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), pp. 79-108, and Bernstein, "Incommensurability and Otherness Revisited," in *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 57-78.

8. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 217-221, pp. 303-343.

9. See Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume II," in *The Foucault Reader*, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-338; Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, Vol. 2 of *The History of Sexuality*, tr. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1985), p. 4; Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49; and Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader*, *op. cit.*, pp. 351-352. See also Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *op. cit.*, p. 208; Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self," *op. cit.*, p. 15; Foucault, "The Return of Morality," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 243; and Maurice Florence [Michel Foucault], "Foucault, Michel, 1926-," in *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, pp. 315-316 (which characterizes the ethical phase as distinct from earlier ones).

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beings became prefigured as knowing agents free to act within the constraints of power relations. In a 1984 interview, just before he died, he agreed with his interlocutors that he had shifted from studying a "passive subject" to an "active" one, and went on to indicate that these two facets of human beings, even if incommensurable, nevertheless inflect each other.[10] Reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty's late philosophy of the flesh of the world, there is for Foucault a reversibility of human being as subject and object, with the two leaves of Being never coinciding into a stable metaphysical scheme.[11]

Given this view of the subject and object of knowledge, there can be no single way to reflect on truth.[12] Yet, truth was of the greatest concern to Foucault. In one of his many late interviews, he stated: "I believe too much in the truth not to suppose that there are different truths and different ways of saying it."[13] In the "Introduction" to *The Use of Pleasure*, he reflects: "I seem to have gained a better perspective on the way I worked — gropingly, and by means of different or successive fragments — on this project, whose goal is a history of truth."[14] In a way, Foucault

10. Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *The Final Foucault*, ed. by James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1988), p. 11. Also, in "The Subject and Power" Foucault explains that: "There are two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and [a subject] tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (p. 212).

11. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, tr. by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 130-155. See also Foucault, *The Order of Things*, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-321. For other views of the relation between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, see Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34, p. 42, p. 167; Richard C. Cohen, "Merleau-Ponty, The Flesh and Foucault," in *Philosophy Today* 28 (Winter 1984), pp. 329-338; Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, tr. by Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 110-112; Rudi Visker, "Raw Being and Violent Discourse: Foucault, Merleau-Ponty and the (Dis-)Order of Things," in *Merleau-Ponty in Contemporary Perspective*, ed. by P. Burke and J. Van der Veken (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), pp. 109-120; and Nick Crossley, *The Politics of Subjectivity: Between Foucault and Merleau-Ponty* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994).

12. Foucault, "The Masked Philosopher," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 330: "What is philosophy if not a way of reflecting, not so much on what is true and what is false, as on our relationship to truth." For a discussion of Foucault on truth, see Thomas Flynn, "Truth and Sujectivation in the Later Foucault," in *Journal of Philosophy* 82 (1985), pp. 531-540, and John Rajchman, *Truth and Eros: Foucault, Lacan, and the Question of Ethics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 121-131.

13. Michel Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

14. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11 and 6; Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2, 9-10 and 15-16; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. 1, tr. by Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1978), p. 60; and Foucault, *Remarks on Marx*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

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engaged in writing a series of interrelated histories of truth. In *The Order of Things*, truth is relative to each *episteme* (with the progressive dissolution of truth-as-correspondence).[15] In *Discipline and Punish*, the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, and other work from the 1970s, truth is seen to be woven into regimes of knowledge/power. In the last phase, truth is presented as a component in various practices of self-formation. The question of truth was central to Foucault's concerns throughout, but its critical exploration shifted from framework to framework. In the end, for Foucault, there is no final or single truth about truth.[16]

Since Foucault did not believe that there could be a fixed epistemic framework for discerning the truths of modernity, it is misleading to read a book like *Discipline and Punish* as implying that there is nothing but the grips of disciplinary power. The "passive subject" of such a study does not pretend to exhaust what counts as being human. Yet, if human agency is not dismissed in the various archaeological and genealogical studies, and instead is preserved by "practice," this does not mean that there is some extra-historical truth. Without rejecting universals outright, Foucault maintained strong skepticism about there being a human nature.[17] But, with no recourse to a universal human essence beyond History, where might Foucault have located the resources needed to resist modernity's totalizing grids of normalization? The late work on ethics and the advocacy of experimenting with an aesthetics of existence can be taken to be hermeneutic moves that inflect and complement the earlier studies. In Foucault's construal, the history of ethics is a philosophical exercise that, as a practice of freedom, empowers one's capacities for transgressive resistance.

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15. In a 1978 interview Foucault claimed there were non-discontinuous dimensions to *The Order of Things*. See "On Power," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

16. According to Foucault: "After first studying the games of truth (*jeux de verité*) in their interplay with one another, as exemplified by certain empirical sciences in the 17th and 18th centuries, and then studying their interaction with power relations, as exemplified by punitive practices — I felt obliged to study the games of truth in the relationship of self with self and the forming of oneself as a subject. . ." See *The Use of Pleasure*, *op. cit.*, p. 6. This is a clear sighted retrospection, except perhaps for the use of the term "games" to describe all phases of reflecting upon truth. Perhaps it is best to follow the lead of Foucault's own shifting vocabulary usage and reserve the phrase "games of truth" for the later phases of inquiry and to continue using terms like "epistemes" and "regimes" for the earlier studies (but cf. Foucault's 1974 text on "La vérité et les formes juridiques," in *Dits et écrits*, 4 Vols., ed. by Daniel Defert and François Ewald [Paris: Gallimard,1974], Vol. 2 p. 539ff). On "game" itself, see Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 16.

17. Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self," *op. cit.*, p. 10-11; Foucault, "The Art of Telling the Truth," *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95; and Foucault, "Foucault, Michel, 1926-," *op. cit.*, p. 317. Rabinow articulates Foucault's position in his "Introduction" to *The Foucault Reader*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5.

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The Study of Ethics

In "What is Enlightenment?" Foucault spells out that the work of criticism "is no longer going to be the search for formal universal structures, but a historical investigation into the events that have led to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects . . . In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological — and not transcendental — in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know; but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has finally become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom."[18] Archaeological and genealogical investigation is a form of history that reflects on identity, disclosing from the outside the specific sites where modernity can be resisted. This mode of critical history, however, does not suggest how to resist, nor the resources to do so.[19]

Even if people are free agents within a social field of interaction, and through historical reflection become clearer about the contours and limits of contemporary existence, they do not automatically go beyond those limits. Foucault is clear that one's actions influence, but do not determine other people's actions. The other remains free to respond to one's acts within a preconstituted field of strategies.[20] This means that, even in acting creatively, one regularly remain within the bounds of normality. Nor does Foucault advocate that one can simply negate or step out of social life.[21]

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18. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

19. Cf. Paul Veyne's recounting of Foucault's own words in "The Final Foucault and His Ethic," in *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Autumn 1993), pp. 6-7.

20. Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *op. cit.*, pp. 219-226. See also Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, and Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

21. Foucault's late work does not advocate a "negative theology" (see Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight*, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-181) or a "negative hermeneutics of refusal" (see John Caputo, "On Not Knowing Who We Are: Madness, Hermeneutics, and the Night of Truth in Foucault," in *Foucault and the Critique of Institutions*, ed. by John Caputo and Mark Yount [University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1993], pp. 249-258). On the contrary, the late Foucault advances a "positive ethic of self-formation" (see Bernauer and Mahon, "The Ethics of Michel Foucault," *op. cit.*, p. 144) — or an expansion of capacities.

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To the panoptical gaze, playing the game badly or refusing to play at all will quickly register as signs of incompetence or deviance. Such subnormal and abnormal behavior tend to unleash disciplinary forces meant to renormalize.[22] Given this understanding of modernity, what is needed is that one play the games of modernity differently — but so differently and at the same time so effectively that, in the process, the rules are altered and the social field changed. One would experiment with denormalizing ways of life that detach the forms of individuality from modernity's webs of totalization. But how would the invention of such practices be accomplished? This is the motivation of Foucault's turn to ethics.

In an overview of his last works, Foucault clarified what he meant by ethics: "There is another side to the moral prescriptions, which most of the time is not isolated as such but is, I think, very important: the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself, *rapport á soi*, which I call ethics, and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions."[23] The history of ethics is by no means a neat break from earlier work. Foucault argues that the study of past ethical practices helps clarify the contingency of current forms of life; at times, he continues to use the term "genealogy" to characterize the project. But however much the study of ethics furthers the earlier genealogies, it situates the investigation within the horizon of everyday experience and thereby reconfigures the writing of history. Foucault wrote that he intended "to examine both the difference that keeps us at a remove from a way of thinking in which we recognize the origin of our own, and the proximity that remains in spite of that distance which we never cease to explore,"[24] and he criticized an earlier genealogical study of *The History of Sexuality* on the grounds that: "One of the numerous points where I was wrong in that book was what I said about this [Chinese] *ars erotica*. I should have opposed our science of sex to a contrasting practice in our own culture."[25] Also, on several occasions, he claimed that since antiquity moral codes and interdictions have changed little[26] — a far cry from the

22. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979).

23. Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 352.

24. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

25. Michel Foucault, *Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, tr. by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York, 1991), pp. 347-348. See also Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," *op. cit.*, p. 45.

26. Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 249-251. See also, Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 355.

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structural discontinuities of epistemes in *The Order of Things*. Foucault seems to have made something like a hermeneutical turn.[27]

When, in the late work, the investigations moved within everyday experience, and the subject became active, historical time became disclosed in the *long durée* of tradition.[28] Foucault insisted that one could not take up past forms of life as "alternatives" to the present; yet, he advocated that one experiment with certain ancient ethical practices.[29] What he may have meant is that there cannot be a neutral, positivist recovery of past practices, but, instead, that the appropriation of and experimentation with an ancient aesthetics of existence is more along the lines of repetition, as discussed by Heidegger in Division Two of *Being and Time*.

Resistance and Repetition

In the early 1980s, Foucault proclaimed his indebtedness to Heidegger. On one occasion, he recounted: "When you feel an overwhelming influence, you try to open a window. Paradoxically enough, Heidegger is not very difficult for a Frenchman to understand: When every word is an enigma, you are in a not-too-bad position to understand Heidegger. *Being and Time* is difficult, but the more recent works are clearer."[30] In another interview, although modestly disclaiming that he did not know *Being and Time* all that well, he emphasized that: "For me, Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher. I began by reading Hegel, then Marx, and I set out to read Heidegger in 1951 or 1952; then, in 1952 or 1953 — I don't remember anymore — I read Nietzsche. I still have here the notes that I took when I was reading Heidegger. I've got tons of them! And they are much more

27. On hermeneutics in Foucault, see Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," in *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1991), p. 220; and David Ingram, "Foucault and Habermas on the Subject of Reason," in *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, *op. cit.*, p. 237ff. Caputo, in "On Not Knowing Who We Are," *op. cit.*, suggests that Foucault was engaged with hermeneutics throughout.

28. As Deleuze argued, Foucault's late "rediscovery" of Heidegger included agreement with the view of time as auto-affectation. See *Foucault*, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108, p. 148, nn. 33 and 34. For earlier phases of Foucault's reflections on time and human being, see *The Order of Things*, *op. cit.*, p. 332, and Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, tr. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 12.

29. Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, pp. 343-347. For different articulations of this topic, see *ibid.*, pp. 349-350, p. 362; Foucault, "An Ethics of Pleasure," in *Foucault Live (Interviews 1966-84)*, ed. by Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext[e], 1989), pp. 269-270; Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15; and Foucault, "The Return to Morality," *op. cit.*, p. 247, p. 249.

30. Foucault, "Truth, Power, Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

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important than the ones I took on Hegel and Marx. My entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger."[31]

In one of his earliest scholarly publications, a 1954 essay on Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence*, Foucault deployed the methods of existential analysis. At one juncture, he reworked the Heideggerian themes of authenticity, temporality, and repetition into the interpretation of a dream.[32] This analysis demonstrates that, from the very beginning, Foucault was intimate with the account of repetition and authenticity in Division Two. In general, *Being and Time* was fundamental for his early studies on psychiatry and madness.[33] Foucault acknowledged the influence: "Laing too was very impressed by all that: for a long time, he also referred to existential analysis (he was more of a Sartrean, I a Heideggerian)."[34] Nor did these "existential" concerns die away. In an earlier version of the "Preface" intended for, but never included in *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault was emphatic that "study[ing] forms of experience . . . is an idea that originated with an earlier project, in which I made use of the methods of existential analysis in the field of psychiatry and in the domain of 'mental illness.'"[35] The last books were in part a return to his earlier concern with "existential" issues.

During the eight years between the publication of the first and second volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault reformulated the sexuality project, recasting it as a history of ethics, with *Being and Time* once again playing a decisive role. His recurrent use of the ancient phrase "the care of the self" (*le souci de soi*) echoes the key notion in *Being and Time* of "care" (*Sorge*). His exploration of how the governing of oneself modifies the governing of others recalls Division Two in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger explains that *Dasein*'s authentic resoluteness opens new ways of being with others. But, above all, Foucault took note of Heidegger's views about the repetition of historical practices as a path toward self-renewal.

According to Heidegger, one has always already fallen into inauthentic ways. One accepts the given forms of life and who one is as grounded and

31. Foucault, "The Return to Morality," *op. cit.*, p. 250.

32. "She does not take up her past in the authentic form of repetition. . . This temporalization of existence in Ellen West is an inauthentic one." See Foucault, "Dream, Imagination, Existence," in Foucault and Ludwig Binswanger, *Dream and Existence*, ed. by Keith Hoeller (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1993], p. 65.

33. See Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Forward," in Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, tr. by Alan Sheridan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), xxxi-xxxiii. See also Caputo, "On Not Knowing Who We Are," p. 234ff.

34. Foucault, *Remarks on Marx*, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

35. Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality*, Volume II," *op. cit.*, p. 334.

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natural. But, in suffering the dread of being-toward-death and responding to the call of conscience, one may detach from the binding everydayness of the current ways of existence. One is on the path of authenticity with the proviso that one can never shed inauthentic socialization. An important exercise for authentic self-reinterpretation is to thematize tradition. Because *Dasein* is futural, meaning that human being *is* its possibilities, Heidegger claims that "the central theme of historical science is the *possibility* of existence." Consequently: "The theme of historical science is neither that which has happened just once for all nor something universal that floats above it, but the possibility which has been factically existent. The possibility does not get repeated as such . . . if it becomes perverted into the colourlessness of a supratemporal model. Only by historicality which is factical and authentic can the history of what has-been-there, as a resolute fact, be disclosed in such a manner that in repetition the 'force' of the possible gets struck home into one's factical existence — in other words that it comes toward that existence in its futural character.[36]

Heidegger's point is that past practices are sedimented in current ones, but that the possibilities of existence they may hold remain dormant and world-less. Historiological repetition, however, can re-energize these traces of past forms of life and project them into current practices, thereby widening the scope of one's actions. In this way, even as one remains thoroughly a socialized being, one becomes authentically renewed and enlarged.

For Heidegger, the possibilities of existence cannot be construed theoretically as an enumeration of choices but, rather, indicate both a creative and a delimited knowing-how to get on in a given situation. The folding of past practices into present ones, as the event of authentic repetition, "widens" the possibilities of action within the *current* world of *Dasein*.

Foucault was aware of the productive role of historical repetition: ". . . it is part of the function in memory and culture to be able to reactualize any object whatever that has already featured [in the tradition]. Repetition is always possible; repetition with application, transformation."[37]

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36. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 447 (translation modified). Heidegger's rejection of "the colorlessness of a supratemporal model" finds parallels in Foucault's late essays and interviews. In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault queries: "Why [do I write a history of the prison]? Simply because I am interested in the past? No, if one means by that writing a history of the past in terms of the present. Yes, if one means writing the history of the present" (p. 31). This may be an affirmative reply to Heidegger's "question of whether a 'history of the Present' [*Geschichte der Gegenwart*] is possible." See *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

37. Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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Foucault's formulation of the issue has to do with his late theory of problemization, according to which our modes of being become subjects and objects of knowledge only to the extent that they are problematized in thought.[38] What is thoroughly hermeneutical, however, is the pronouncement that historical repetition is "repetition with application, transformation." That repetition is productive and transformative is a theme developed in *Being and Time*; while the topic of application also descends from Heideggerian hermeneutics.[39] Foucault's invocation of application suggests that the repetition of a historical object is not an event of disinterested recovery, but a concerned engagement with the past. When Foucault advocates that one take up the Greek arts of living, and insists that this cannot be a nostalgic return, he is making a hermeneutic claim that historical repetition is a transformative event that responds to contemporary problematics. The appropriating and folding of past practices into present ones is an activity of application that produces new possibilities of action. From the vantage point of this hermeneutic trajectory, trying to take up an alien practice, such as a Chinese *ars erotica* cannot be said to revitalize sedimented possibilities. Even if such an appropriation did succeed, it would run an increased risk, Foucault might add, of seeming non-traditional and abnormal. By taking up a practice from Western history, as with the folding of ancient friendship into interpersonal relations, one transforms oneself from within traditions and amidst normalized routines.

Yet, if Foucault agrees with Heidegger that tradition is a viable resource for the transformation of modes of being, he also offers some counterpoints. Heidegger does not specify what kinds of historical practices may be appropriated for the purposes of authentic repetition. He also does not clarify, beyond certain abstractions, what kinds of historical writing might best serve self-reinterpretation. Foucault is much more concrete on these matters. He indicates that historical investigation may be a transformative repetition of its objects, but that there are different modes of critical history, different kinds of objectification and subjectification of human being. Archaeology and genealogy posit the human subject as a "construction." Repetition in these cases leads less to the expansion of one's capacities and more to a thematic understanding of the events that have constituted identity. On the other hand, the history of ethics discloses

38. On this topic, see Michael Schwartz, "Critical Reproblemization: Foucault and the Task of Modern Philosophy," in *Radical Philosophy* 91 (Sept.-Oct. 1998), pp. 19-29.

39. See Jean Grodin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, tr. by Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 115.

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human being as a subject of self-empowered agency. Repetition here re-energizes sedimented know-how and enlarges the possibilities of action. In the Foucaultian scheme of things, the study of ethics, rather than archaeology or genealogy, is the mode of critical history that takes up tradition as a resource for self-transformation.

Foucault not only specifies what kind of history may best serve self-transformation, but also severs the event of historical repetition from one's becoming authentic. He historicizes all practices of self, whether "authentic" or not.[40] According to the Heideggerian account, *Dasein* is inauthentic, because its ways of being are proper to "anyone." Authenticity is a modification of this inauthenticity. In the dreadful detachment from the seriousness of one's practices, *Dasein* attunes to that potentiality of existence radically individuated for each *Dasein*: death or, more precisely, being-toward-death. Unlike this or that practice, being-toward-death is non-transferable: one cannot existentially die for the other. By suffering the dread of being-toward-death, responding to the call of conscience (care), and becoming authentic, *Dasein* assumes responsibility for its being; it can now, for the first time, "choose" its modality of existence. Through the repetition of the historical past, *Dasein* may achieve authentic self-reinterpretation.

Foucault eschews these existential themes. Nowhere does he indicate that one must suffer the dread of being-toward-death to effect self-transformation.[41] And nowhere does he suggest that there is a singular "authentic" path that leads to the repetition of past practices. For Foucault, there are a plurality of ways of working on oneself; and these techniques of self are themselves given by culture: "On the other hand and inversely, I would say that if now I am interested, in fact, in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual

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40. For commentary on Sartrean authenticity, see Foucault, "Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 351. But see especially the modifications in the subsequent French edition: "Or il me semble que le rapport à soi doit pouvoir être décrit selon les multiplicités de formes dont l' 'authenticité' n'est qu'une des modalités possibles; il faut concevoir que le rapport à soi est structuré comme une pratique qui peut avoir ses modèles, ses conformités, ses varfiantes, mais aussi ses créations. La pratique de soi est un domaine complexe et multiple." See Michel Foucault, "A propos de la généalogie de l'éthique: un aperçu de travail en cours," in *Dits et écrits*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 617.

41. The modern-historical displacement and neglect of death in lieu of biopower's enhancement of life is the unstated backdrop of Foucault's ethical project. See Rainer Forst, "Endlichkeit, Freiheit, Individualität: Die Sorge um das Selbst bei Heidegger und Foucault," in *Ethos der Moderne: Foucaults Kritik der Aufklärung*, ed. by Eva Erdmann, Rainer Forst, and Axel Honneth (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1990), pp. 167-172.

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invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group."[42]

Transforming oneself into a certain kind of ethical agent requires an ontic practice, a practice of self, an ethics. Foucault, therefore, agrees with Heidegger that historical repetition is a means of self-transformation. But, he (1) rejects authenticity as a general and necessary component of work on oneself, (2) investigates the historical pluralities of ethical practices, and (3) owns that a certain manner of historical repetition can itself count as a practice of self. Work on oneself can either assume a form from one's own culture or "leap over" the present-day stock and take up, via repetition, the sedimented forms of past ethical life. Foucault recommended the latter path. Why not just take up the available practices of self in one's own culture? Although Foucault was never expansive on this matter, it is plausible to assume that he saw contemporary ethics as bound up with processes of totalization, that practices of self such as dieting, exercising, athletic training, and working on one's inner child are techniques oriented toward renormalization.[43] The worry is not that these procedures are bogus, but rather that they may help one become a thoroughly normalized self. As he put it: "What is at stake, then, is this: How can the growth of capabilities be disconnected from the intensification of power relations?"[44] Foucault's response was to refuse mainstream techniques of self and to seek out pre-modern ethical practices.

For all its indebtedness to *Being and Time*, Foucault's ethical project was a considerable rethinking of the stakes and procedures of self-transformation.[45] Instead of taking up and recommending the Heideggerian path of suffering the dread of being-toward-death, Foucault recommended archaeology and genealogy as flexible methods that allow one to detach from the binding everydayness of current practices. In place of Heidegger's abstract invocation of historical science, Foucault inaugurated a history of ethics as the means to appropriate tradition as a resource that

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42. Foucault, "The Ethic of Care of the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 11.

43. See Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth," *Political Theory* 21, no. 2 (May 1993), pp. 222-223, p. 227, n. 53. See also Foucault's contrast of the "California cult of self" with an ancient aesthetics of existence in "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 362.

44. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, p. 48.

45. For another instance of the reworking Heideggerian themes (which, in this case, Foucault was explicit about), see Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 223-224, n. 4.

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empowers becoming denormalized individuals. Whereas archaeology and genealogy help locate where one might resist, showing the contingency of certain forms of life, the history of ethics informs one how, as properly socialized being, one might nevertheless act otherwise.

To act otherwise is, in the first instance, to work on oneself anew, to enact a denormalization of who one is. The effects of this work may then alter one's social interactions and relations. Foucault was clear that ethics implies complex relations with others. He offered the example of the ancient Greeks: "For the Greeks it is not because it is care for others that it is ethical. Care for self is ethical in itself, but it implies complex relations with others, in the measure where this *ethos* of freedom is also a way of caring for others. That is why it is important for a free man, who behaves correctly, to know how to govern his wife, his children, and his home. There, too, is the art of governing. *Ethos* implies also a relation with others to the extent that care for self renders one competent to occupy a place in the city, in the community or in interindividual relationships which are proper — whether it be to exercise a magistracy or to have friendly relationships. And the care for self implies also a relationship to the other to the extent that, in order to really care for self, one must listen to the teachings of a master. One needs a guide, a counselor, a friend — someone who will tell you the truth. Thus, the problem of relationship with others is present all along this development of care for self."[46]

Similarly, Heidegger sees authentic resoluteness as transfiguring *Dasein*'s behavior with others: "*Dasein*'s resoluteness towards itself is what first makes it possible to let the Others who are with it 'be' in their own most potentiality-for-Being . . ."[47] While Foucault does not delve into existential-ontological analysis, and focuses on the plurality of ontic practices, he agrees with Heidegger that work on oneself can change how one interacts with others. For Foucault, then, the repetition of past ethical practices can inform not only self-renewal but also one's social dealings. One's interactions, so enlarged, have an increased chance of being neither abnormal (deviant) nor subnormal (incompetent), but effectively denormalizing.[48] One may conduct oneself to play the games of modernity so

46. Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 7.

47. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

48. Foucault acknowledges that in strategic interactions certain normalized acts can modify "the rules of the game, *up to a certain point*." See "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, p. 48, italics added. What is needed is to fold past practices into present ones so to *transform* the rules beyond normality. Foucault also suggests that, in some contexts, one can simply substitute one game for another. See "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 15.

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differently, yet with efficiency, that there is a going beyond the forms of self that modernity requires for its networks of totalization.This is the hope of Foucault's turn to ethics.

Governmentality, Politics, and an Aesthetics of Existence

In January 1983, Foucault began teaching a course at the Collège de France titled "The Government of Self and Others."[49] In February, *Éditions de Seuil* announced a book by Foucault of the same title as forthcoming in a new series *Des Travaux*.[50] The ancient Greek care of self was an instance of this intertwining of the government of self and others; the self-governance achieved through ethical practice enabled the male citizen to govern not only his household, but also the city: ethics had virtuous consequences for ancient Greek political life. In these last years, Foucault had become interested in mapping the changing historical linkages between techniques of governing oneself and those governing others,[51] a coupling he sometimes referred to an instance of governmentality.[52]

In his lectures on "security, territory, and population," Foucault proclaimed that the current one in "the era of a 'governmentality' first discovered in the eighteenth century. . . . [where] the problems of governmentality and the techniques of government have become the only political issue, the only real space for political struggle and contestation."[53] How can one approach politics? In the late 1970s, he wrote that "political analysis and criticism have in a large measure still to be invented — so too have the strategies which will make it possible to modify the relations of force. . . . in reality. The problem is not so much that of defining a political 'position' (which is to chose from a pre-existing set of possibilities) but to imagine and to bring into being new schemas of politicization."[54] In the early

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49. "Chronologie," in *Dits et écrits*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 61.

50. *Ibid.* See also Colin Gordon, "Man of Action in a World of Thought," in *Times Literary Supplement* 4864 (June 21, 1996), p. 9.

51. Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.

52. On governmenality, see Foucault, "Subjectivité et vérité," in *Dits et écrits*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 213; Foucault, "Technologies of Self," *op. cit.*, p. 19; and Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

53. Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. by Graham Burchel, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 103.

54. Foucault, "The History of Sexuality," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 190.

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1980s, having inaugurated the ethical project, he reiterated that one needed "to question politics, and to bring to light in the political field of historical and philosophical interrogation, some problems that had not been recognized there before."[55] Instead of counting oneself as belonging to a pre-existing "we," Foucault saw it as "necessary to make the future formation of a 'we' possible, by elaborating the question. Because it seems to me that the 'we' must not be previous to the question; it can only be the result — and the necessary temporary result — of the question as its is posed in the new terms in which one formulates it."[56]

One of the strategies Foucault came to propose for bringing forth new schema of politicization was to approach politics obliquely through ethics. If "the question of an ethical subject does not have much of a place in contemporary political thought,"[57] this does not mean that existing ethical practices are not linked to politics. Within any regime of governmentality, it "is free individuals who try to determine, to delimit the liberty of others and, in order to do that, they dispose of certain instruments to govern others. That rests indeed on freedom, on the relationship of self to self and the relationship to the other."[58] Thinking about the liberty inherent in ethical practices points to a space from where one might inaugurate resistance. Transforming and displacing one's current practices of self can have an impact on the reigning governmentalization of politics. Ethics would temporarily displace politics so that one came to see "politics as an ethics."[59] As Foucault put it: "Maybe our problem is now to discover that the self is nothing else than the historical correlation of the technology built in our history. Maybe the problem is to change those technologies. And in this case, one of the main political problems would be nowadays, in the strict sense of the word, the politics of ourselves."[60]

What the specifically political stakes of ethics would mean,[61] however,

55. Foucault, "Politics and Ethics," in *The Foucault Reader*, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

56. Foucault, "Polemics, Politics, and Problemizations: An Interview with Michel Foucault," in *ibid.*, p. 385.

57. Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

59. Foucault, "Politics and Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 375.

60. Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.

61. On Foucault and politics, see Jon Simons, *Foucault and the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); Andrew Barry *et al.* eds., *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism, and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Charles E. Scott, *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of Ethics and Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), Chapter 12; and John S. Ransom, *Foucault's Discipline: The Politics of Subjectivity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

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was never concretely worked out in the late lectures or publications, presumably due to Foucault's untimely death. Most frustrating is that it is unclear how politics is to be distinguished from social struggles and conflicts.[62] In January 1984, when he was asked whether ethical practices such as "the care for self [could] become the center of a new philosophical thought, of another kind of politics than the one we are seeing today?," he responded with caution that "I admit that I have not gone very far in that direction . . ."[63] Yet, if Foucault was not explicit about the difference between the social and the political, it is clear that his late concern for self-transformation was not advocated as a retreat into indifferent narcissism, but instead as an oblique and experimental strategy for denormalizing current modes of being.[64]

Among the many historical techniques of self that he studied, Foucault recommended that one take up facets of an aesthetics of existence.[65] His motives for doing so have often been miscast. Thus, Pierre Hadot[66]

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62. Foucault, "About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self," *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.

63. Foucault, "The Ethic of the Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 13.

64. The distinction between the social and the political is fundamental for Hannah Arendt. For Foucault's remarks on Arendt, see Foucault, "Politics and Ethics," *op. cit.*, pp. 377-379. More than Foucault realized, Arendt's thought owes much to Heidegger; see Dana R. Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Giorgio Agamben has discerned the proximity of Foucault's views about "biopolitics" to Arendt's construal of the decline of politics in modernity. See his *Homo Sacer: Il Potere Sovrano e la Nuda Vita* (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), pp. 5-7.

65. For recent interpretations and evaluations of Foucault's turn to an aesthetics of existence, see Forst, "Endlichkeit, Freiheit, Individualität," *op. cit.*, pp. 176-178 and 147; Hans Herbert Kögler, "Fröhliche Subjectivität: Historische Ethik und dreifache Ontologie beim späten Foucault," in *Ethos der Moderne*, *op. cit.*, p. 204ff.; Hans Herbert Kögler, *Michel Foucault*, *op. cit.*, p. 175ff.; Andrew Thacker, "Foucault's Aesthetics of Existence," *Radical Philosophy* 63 (Spring 1993), pp. 13-21; and David Boothroyd, "Foucault's Alimentary Philosophy: Care of the Self and Responsibility for the Other," *Man and World* 29 (1996), p. 367ff. See also Reiner Schürmann, "On Constituting Oneself an Anarchistic Subject," *Praxis International* 6 (1986), pp. 294-310.

66. See Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Notion of 'The Cultivation of the Self'," in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, *op. cit.*, p. 230 (reprinted as Pierre Hadot, "Reflections on the Idea of 'Cultivation of the Self'," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. by Arnold I. Davidson [Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995], p. 211). In their respective engagements with ancient practices of self, Foucault stressed the aesthetics of existence, whereas Hadot has focused on exercises of wisdom. See Arnold Davidson, "Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics, and Ancient Thought," in *Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-140. This difference in interpretive emphasis has much to do with their contrasting orientations toward modernity. Whereas Foucault wished to denormalize current practices, Hadot desires the revival of exercises of wisdom that might "open ourselves up to the universal." See Hadot, "Reflections on the Notion of 'The Cultivation of the Self'," *op. cit.*, p. 230.

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wonders whether Foucault was not advocating a new form of dandyism. But, formulated in this tone the query is beside the point.[67] The appropriation of certain facets of the Greek art of living was, for Foucault, not an aesthetic lark, but a "political" tactic. He believed that in ancient times the moral *telos* of such practices had not been tied, as in modernity, to larger societal processes of normalization.[68] By experimenting with these practices, which are still sedimented in one's own,[69] Foucault hoped that there would be some denormalizing consequences for oneself and for others. But he knew that there was no way of ensuring the outcome.[70]

Foucault never recommended that everyone take up the same path of ethical experimentation — he once said that the "search for a form of morality acceptable to everybody in the sense that everyone should submit to it, strikes me as catastrophic"[71] — and he does not suggest that one restrict such appropriations to a Greek aesthetics of existence. Nor did he believe that ethics was the only viable political avenue, saying that he did "not think that the only point of possible resistance to political power. . . .

67. As Jacques Alain-Miller has pointed out: "Wisdom in particular supposes an integration in the cosmos which is no longer possible in a world which is constantly being shaped by discourse and by science." See *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, *op. cit.*, p. 259. Foucault would add: "What we need to preserve is not what is left of the *Aufklärung*, in terms of fragments; it is the very question of that event and its meaning (the question of the historicity of thinking about the universal) that must now be kept present in our minds as what must be thought." See "The Art of Telling the Truth," *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95. From a Foucaultian viewpoint, Hadot's concluding remarks that one need not "believe in the Stoic's Nature and universal Reason to practice these exercises, but in practicing them one lives concretely according to reason. . . one accedes concretely to the universality of the cosmic perspective, to the marvellous and mysterious presence of the universe" sound detached and aesthetic, and court a blind relation to modernity's Reason(s). See Hadot, "Reflections on the Notion of 'The Cultivation of the Self'," *op. cit.*, p. 231.

68. Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," p. 341, p. 348, and p. 362. See also Foucault, "The Return of Morality," *op. cit.*, p. 244. Foucault suspected that there might be an affinity between the current slackening of ties between morality and religion with the makeup of Greek ethics (Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," *op. cit.*, p. 49; Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, p. 343; and Foucault, "The Return of Morality," *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254).

69. Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," *op. cit.*, pp. 350-351, p. 362, pp. 370-371; Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42; and Foucault, *Use of Pleasure*, p. 11.

70. On the introduction of chance into the history of thought, see Foucault, "The Discourse on Language," in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, *op. cit.*, p. 231. See also Foucault, "An Aesthetics of Existence," *op. cit.*, p. 45; cf. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, p. 46.

71. Foucault, "The Return of Morality," *op. cit.*, p. 254.

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lies in the relationship of self to self."[72] Foucault's inauguration of a history of ethics and his advocacy of an art of modern living were only the very first steps in devising ways to resist modernity. The probing of ethics was part of an incipient, inchoate, but broad rethinking of the limits and possibilities of contemporary politics.

"The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them."[73] For Foucault, archaeology and genealogy are modes of critical history that discern these contingent limits, while the study and appropriation of past ethical practices empower experimentation to go beyond them. Ethics styled as an art of living is not a withdrawal into dandyism, but an activity of resistance that aims to instigate new schemas of political existence. Even though Foucault's ethical proposal is, by its own admission, somewhat thin and uncertain as a "political" tactic, and also lacks explicit normative direction

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72. Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 19. Rainer Rochlitz complains that Foucault's aesthetics of existence "is a project for privileged minorities, liberated from all functions in the material reproduction of society," concluding that: "There is something laughable about Foucault's proposing a new art of living, if we continue to bear in mind the threats of genocide which he had brandished some years earlier. If some social minority decided to set about making its life a work of art, this would hardly be a matter of concern for a power apparatus of this nature. Foucault's greatness lies in the fact that he did not hide these contradictions." See "The Aesthetics of Existence: Post-Conventional Morality and the Theory of Power in Michel Foucault," in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, *op. cit.*, pp. 255 and 257. By imposing a rigid either/or mode of thinking and thus positing that the pursuit of an art of living must exclude joining in struggles for impoverished minorities, Rochlitz misses the detotalizing thrust of Foucault's ethico-politics. According to McCarthy, Foucault's view is that "the practice of the self is a practice of liberty precisely insofar as it frees formation of the self from such functional contexts. The question of whether this is compatible with any type of social order is left largely open, as is that of the new types of community to which it could give rise. These are, of course, very important questions for *social* movements struggling to change socially and to have those changes *legally* and *institutionally* secured." See "The Critique of Impure Reason," *op. cit.*, p. 225, n. 89) Yet, what is at stake for Foucault is not the freeing of self from functional contexts but the transforming of contexts of self through practical experimentation. Furthermore, although the *question* of community is important, modernity as construed by Foucault is not ordered along the lines of a substantial community. The formation of a successful "community" — Foucault's political "we" perhaps — would be an ongoing achievement of creative resistance that, if instituted legally, would be in immediate danger of folding back into totalizing processes that would jeopardize its very character as "communal."

73. Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," *op. cit.*, p. 50.

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beyond the imperative to exercise "ontological liberty"[74] (the reflexive freedom to alter our modes of being in the world so to minimize domination),[75] the project is still worthwhile, not the least because Foucaultian ethics is not merely intellective — not merely a matter of redescribing oneself otherwise — but cuts much deeper into the very fiber of identity, challenging one to assume the difficult and often painful labor of self-transformation. No doubt this can make anyone uncomfortable, even fearful, and perhaps predisposed (without realizing it) to reject Foucault's turn to practices of self. But it would be a mistake to do this, to dismiss out of hand an experimental approach that might contribute, in some manner, toward re-invigorating one's capacities to act as effective political agents.

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74. "Liberty is the ontological condition of ethics. But ethics is the deliberate form assumed by liberty." See Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, p. 4.

75. See "The Ethic of Care for the Self," *op. cit.*, especially pp. 18-19, and the distinctions drawn there between "power" and "domination." Here the a crucial text for Foucault is Heidegger's discussion of the two poles of solicitude (*Fürsorge*) in *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

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Notes and Commentaries:

éléments *Interview**

1. On the History of Telos

For many years, the *Telos* has been regarded as one of the leading journals of the New Left in the US. At the beginning, it was often seen as the journal of the American followers of the Frankfurt School, founded by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer. Could you tell us when, by whom and in what circumstances it was started and give us some historical background, explaining in particular the evolution of its relations with the second generation of the Frankfurt School (Jürgen Habermas)? And how do you and the people you work with define yourselves? What themes interest you most?

Telos was *not* founded in 1968 as an American organ of the Frankfurt School. It was meant to provide the New Left, at the time embroiled in internal discussions about its ideological identity, with a rigorous theoretical perspective and a clear sense of direction. The name comes from Edmund Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences* — a work written in the mid-1930s, which did not become well-known until the late 1950s, and was not translated into English until the early 1970s. By 1968 in the US, however, it had influenced a few New Left students increasingly dissatisfied not only with the Vietnam War, the crass consumerism marketed as a cross-cultural eschatological placebo, and what passed for critical thought in American universities, but primarily with the predominant nihilism and meaninglessness. This helps explain why, from the very beginning, there has been a political tension between the journal and the New Left, which at that time was increasingly influenced by Marxism-Leninism, but also between the journal and a readership not always familiar with the theoretical references of the editors and writers.

Although, from the very beginning, we made every effort to translate into English at least some of the major authors from which we drew our inspiration, our efforts to de-provincialize a student culture cretinized by three decades of the intellectual Cold War were not entirely successful. The main ideas of Western Marxism, Critical Theory, and Husserlian phenomenology were absorbed only

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* This interview was carried out by e-mail. It is to appear in French in *éléments*, to give an overview of *Telos*' trajectory over the years and to explain some of the positions taken by some of the editors. It appears here in order to provide the same overview to the current readership of *Telos*, which may not be altogether familiar with this history.

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gradually within the academic market-place, and were de-activated and mainlined by a resurgent Marxism and the predominant welfare-state liberalism, which only confirmed Critical Theory's thesis concerning the system's immense ability to integrate all opposition. At any rate, along with the whole of the New Left, we knew what we were opposed to — consumerism, Stalinism, authoritarianism, racism, exploitation, etc. — but we had not even begun to prefigure any alternative to the *status quo*. The vague sense that Western culture in general and American society in particular had lost their bearings and needed to rethink themselves in terms of their traditions and values only suggested a need to reappropriate and to rethink the past. It did not automatically generate either a common social analysis or a clear political project. This is why it could be articulated only in terms of the kind of radical discourse predominant at the time.

Sophisticated as it was, Husserl's account of the crisis of Western civilization only called for the regrounding of a forgotten project, whose teleology, however, still defined modern society. Yet, his vindication of the primacy of the life-world, the *doxa,* and intersubjectivity not only provided an immensely superior theoretical foundation for the critique of alienation — a concept which had just been rediscovered, following the publication of Marx's economic-philosophical manuscripts, and popularized through the immensely influential work of Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* — but also for the Western Marxism of the early 1920s, which we assumed wrongly to have been prevented by the Third International from developing into the kind of theoretical orientation we desperately needed. Only gradually did we realize how, despite its philosophical sophistication and contrary to Merleau-Ponty's reconstruction of its history in *The Adventures of the Dialectic*, this version of Marxism was really no alternative, and led directly into the Bolshevik apotheosis. At that time, however, such a cultural and philosophical reappropriation of Marxism immediately clashed with official Marxism-Leninism, which had long since degenerated into nothing more than a legitimating ideology for Soviet imperialism. It dismissed alienation as a mere economic epiphenomenon, which would disappear automatically with the abolition of capitalism and wage labor. This simultaneous rejection of the economism of orthodox Marxism and of the capitalist degradation of mass culture to a marketing device defined the original *Telos* project and led to its identification with the Frankfurt School which, at that time, meant primarily Marcuse's works, and then only those he had published in English.

In the 1960s, the early work of the Institute for Social Research was hardly known in the US or even in Germany. Only a few of Adorno's literary essays, some of his contributions to musicology, and his unbearable musical compositions were readily available. The Institute's explosive analyses of the 1930s and early 1940s had suffered the same fate as the rest of German culture. Despite their obvious oppositional stature, they had been dismissed as inextricably embroiled with the genesis of Nazism, and thus banished from theoretical discourse. What

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little of their social and political criticism was available was deceptively conformist, e.g., some of Adorno's embarrassing contributions to *The Authoritarian Personality* — crude attempts to analyze anti-Semitism and Nazism as collective pathologies, rather than confronting them as historical phenomena *sui generis*. Thus, unlike *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which indicted liberalism as but another expression of the same modernist involution culminating in Nazism and Stalinism, *The Authoritarian Personality* automatically legitimated liberal ideology as "sanity" and "normality": the standard against which all socio-political thought should be evaluated.

At the dawn of the Cold War, the devastating implications of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* — tracing the New Deal, Nazism, and Stalinism back to the same modernist roots — left its two authors in the unenviable position of associating the political system of the country in which they had sought refuge from genocide with that of the one from which they had escaped. No wonder they made sure it would not circulate beyond the Institute's restricted circle. At the time, such an exercise in self-repression was probably the only viable option. After all, they could not count on any support from official communist parties which, with the exception of a few isolated groups of émigré scholars hopelessly attempting to vindicate the Left's original emancipatory vision, were at that time completely under Moscow's control. Even *Dialectic of Enlightenment*'s theoretical precursors, e.g., Lukács' *History and Class-Consciousness* and Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy,* had been checkmated out of the picture by a Stalinist censorship often enforced by firing squads. Habermas, who seems to have read everything in sight, reports that, as a student (before Horkheimer threw him out of the Institute) he knew of the existence of only one copy of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* safely locked away. Consequently, not even insiders like him had a chance to read it.

Only in the late 1960s, when all of these works were finally republished in Germany, did it become clear to what an extent the most explosive parts of *One-Dimensional Man* were actually poorly recycled versions of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and other equally obscure ideas developed in the 1920s and 1930s. But, by then, it was too late. The damage had been done. Encouraged by Marcuse's lingering Manicheanism, which, despite everything, still saw the Soviet Union and socialism as potentially emancipatory, the general reception of this legacy was primarily as a sophisticated variation of a Marxism allegedly repressed first, by fascism and Nazism in Europe, and then, by the American establishment during the Cold War as part of the general obliteration of the Left. In addition to occluding the most interesting features of the Frankfurt School, which identified modernity and the Enlightenment as responsible for catastrophic involutions such as Nazism and Stalinism, this idiosyncratically American reception fed right into the predominant Left-liberal ideology, according to which all social problems were blamed on lingering pre-modern residues whose systematic elimination was hypostatized as the only "progressive agenda."

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Since the New World had no feudal past, conservatism in the US was never associated with the *ancien régime* or the aristocracy, but with the same capitalist interests — those of the revolutionary bourgeoisie — that traditional conservatives in Europe had been fighting throughout the 19th century. Within this context, it was all too easy to confuse *Dialectic of Enlightenment*'s devastating critique of modernity and liberal ideology with merely another version, even if immensely more sophisticated, of the Marxist-Leninist critique of capitalism, despite the fact that, in Horkheimer's and Adorno's analyses, socialism and communism were dismissed as even more advanced stages of the very same bourgeois cultural involution that had resulted in fascism. This is how the most radical features of Critical Theory — the vindication of difference, particularity, and otherness, all pre-modern residues — were transubstantiated into their exact opposites under the banner of "rationality," "equality" and "inclusiveness."

To its credit, *Telos* never bought into this Marxist mainlining of the Frankfurt School. On the contrary: from the very beginning, it cautioned against any such facile and deceptive assimilations of Critical Theory. It is not an accident that *Telos* sought not only to unearth, but also to critically evaluate the Frankfurt School's early work. Thus, *Telos* not only translated and published much of Marcuse's work from the late 1920s, but also went on to criticize its initial Heideggerian foundation and its Freudian replacement after the 1950s. It is also no accident that the very first evaluations of the Frankfurt School bear revealing titles such as "From Tragedy to Farce: The Return of Critical Theory" — warnings concerning not only the impossibility of transposing *hic et nunc* a theory developed in Europe in the 1930s to the US half a century later, but also pointing to the theory's unresolved internal contradictions.

Horkheimer's and Adorno's critique of modernity and of the Enlightenment could be sustained only if grounded on the kind of traditional foundation embodied in what Husserl had articulated as the lifeworld and the *doxa* — precisely the same theoretical horizon that had been discredited, because of its instrumentalization by Nazism and fascism. While it would have been unthinkable for Jewish exiles to develop a critique of their host country from the same general viewpoint deployed by their potential executioners, a generation later *Telos* felt sufficiently removed from the fascist experience to be able to consider it a closed historical chapter. This may have been a tactical mistake, since it has resulted in constant charges of right-wing sympathies by a dogmatic Left unaware of, or unwilling to confront its troubled historical trajectory and, therefore, disposed to confuse efforts to develop a sound theoretical foundation for the Left (understood as the critical opposition to late capitalism as well as Stalinism) with its outright rejection — a typical Marxist-Leninist reaction.

This is but another reason for *Telos*' initial affinity with Marcuse. In the mid-1920s, before Nazism was even a serious political threat, Marcuse (at the time Heidegger's assistant) had attempted to develop precisely such a foundation. His

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1928 "phenomenology of historical materialism" sought to legitimate historical materialism as the logic through which tradition unfolded, disintegrated during its bourgeois phase, and eventually became reintegrated and transcended under socialism, with the overcoming of alienation and the generalization of the kind of individuality hitherto attainable only by a social elite. The emphasis was not merely on economic transformation, but primarily on the recovery of a Being lost and forgotten, because of the generalization of commodity fetishism. This unmistakably Hegelian reconstruction of the trajectory of Western civilization presupposed a post-capitalist modernity understood not as a break with, but as the fulfillment of a pre-modern project embodying universal destiny. Far from advocating the abstract individuality predicated on "liberty, equality, and fraternity," Marcuse postulated the *Aufhebung* of the Western tradition into a vague new synthesis fulfilling its promises.

The appropriation by National Socialism of the Western tradition as exclusively Aryan, the demonization of Jews as the unscrupulous agents of modernist disintegration, and Heidegger's joining the Nazi party put an end to Marcuse's efforts. After 1932, it was no longer possible to appeal to a tradition that had resulted in Nazism, and it became necessary to find a different foundation from which to indict a modernity at that time identified increasingly with capitalism, anti-Marxism, and Americanism. Already in the mid-1930s, the Institute as a whole began to gravitate toward psychoanalysis as an alternative to the kind of tradition being vindicated at that time in Germany as part of the Conservative Revolution — an amorphous movement of intellectuals, completely unknown in the post-WWII US and largely forgotten until recently even in Germany, critical of modernity and tendentially symphathetic to Nazi-like solutions (even though many of them never became Nazis, and some even became active opponents).

Despite the fact that, from time to time, discussions of the relation between psychoanalysis and Marxism appeared in its pages, *Telos* never accepted the substitution of psychoanalysis or of any other deterministic approach for the traditional foundation. This is why it was also hostile to the kind of Heideggerian phenomenology that Marcuse had appropriated and that remained an inextricable part of his later theoretical horizon in the US (especially its much misunderstood critique of "technology"). The "Being" Heidegger wanted to vindicate seemed to us empty and therefore meaningless. All meaning was seen to be constituted by particular traditions in the attempt to access an inevitably elusive "Truth." Stepping out of these traditions also meant foreclosing the possibility of grasping at least that minimal "truth" achievable in the inevitably frustrated effort to capture it. At any rate, this hostility may have had to do with the fact that we never forgave Heidegger for being a Nazi throughout his life and for having tried to access Being by deploying the swastika and going along with the Führer's Aryan phantasies.

This refusal to accept any arbitrary substitution for that phenomenological foundation encapsulating the Western tradition also explains the later rejection of

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Habermas and his linguistic turn, while always remaining sympathetic to John Dewey and pragmatism (despite the capitulation of his followers to the modernist lures of the New Deal). There was an initial flirtation with the "second generation" of Critical Theory, since it presented itself as the Frankfurt School's main legacy. But, it did not take long to realize that it was the paradigmatic product of that de-Nazification which, on the intellectual level, had translated into an indiscriminate de-Germanification of culture. We soon realized the extent to which this "second generation" had rejected all of the original ideas of "the founding fathers," in favor of an eclectic reconfiguration of Critical Theory as a synthesis of American social science and English analytic philosophy. All that seemed to have survived was the German accent. *Telos* actually split on this issue, and the followers of Habermas eventually left the editorial board.

What had happened was not a betrayal of the original ideals, but probably the only viable political accommodation with contradictions the forefathers had left unresolved. The theory of alienation, the dialectic, negative thought, the great refusal — all had been discarded in favor of a recycled liberalism predicated on neo-Kantianism and presupposition metaphysics. Adorno himself can be held responsible for such a theoretical involution. After all, he never could deal effectively with the dialectic, even after he tried to patch it up with the "negative" quantifier. It could not possibly work. The dialectic makes sense only as the trajectory of the already achieved Absolute. But, for Adorno, the trajectory of Western civilization could not be reconstructed from the viewpoint of the Absolute (which had turned out to be modern totalitarianism), but only from that of the Atom Bomb. This is why, whenever his philosophical speculations reach an impasse, he jettisons Hegel in favor of Kant or Nietzsche. In this sense, Habermas and his followers simply took the next step, dismissed the Hegelian legacy altogether, and went on to reinvent the previously despised "bourgeois ideology," now rebaptized as the theory of "civil society."

Telos chose the populist path. If, short of the achievement of the elusive Absolute, all that dialectical reconstructions can yield are trajectories reconstructed from the viewpoint of distinctive traditions, i.e., particular narratives, the alternative is not limited to the arbitrary hypostatization of yet another phony universality — liberal proceduralism or warmed-over natural law — ultimately predicated also on hidden particularistic assumptions. A more honest approach, the one initially chosen by the American "founding fathers" when they drafted the US Constitution (and is once again gaining legitimacy in the wake of the post-modern critique), consists in recognizing the irreducible plurality of cultures, understood as collective codified modes of giving meaning to life, the nominalistic or fideistic foundations of all universality ("In God We Trust"), and the realization that even this *de facto* rejection of universality is itself the product of a definite cultural project: the Christian heritage in general, and Protestantism in particular.

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This is how, after a long journey through European philosophy, *Telos* rediscovered an America most Americans had themselves long since forgotten. Its populism was essentially democracy minus any dogmatic assumptions — liberal or religious — transcending those shared by a particular society whose political status is determined precisely by such an axiological horizon. It acknowledged the legitimacy of particular cultures to structure themselves in whichever way they chose, independently of any transcendental axiological boundaries, themselves necessarily predicated on particular cultural traditions. This meant that even a Nazi society could not be deemed "evil" in the abstract. Thus, it could not be destroyed on the basis of any arbitrary universal mandate, but only by another society or group of societies regarding Nazism as unacceptable. This is how American federalism originally came into being: in order to allow as much freedom as possible, within a contractual arrangement spelling out how different autonomous societies (the states) agreed to relate to each other. The same goes for American pragmatism. It does not reduce merely to the acknowledgement that there are many ways to skin a cat, but, more importantly, especially in a young Dewey deeply steeped in New England puritanism, to the realization that, whether or not to actually skin it is a function of particular *doxa* internalized in the life-world of a particular community and codified in its traditions, customs, and institutions.

This populist/federalist turn, of course, rubs against the predominant ideological grain. Ever since the Civil War, the American political elite has harbored imperialist aspirations that could be fulfilled only by establishing precisely the kind of strong central state that the anti-federalists had sought to avoid in order to protect their cultural and religious particularity. As for what remains of the Left, it has yet to come to terms with the Soviet collapse, which is still interpreted primarily as a case of poor management, rather than as another chapter in the unfolding of the dialectic of Enlightenment and the creeping irrationality of bureaucratic "rationality" in the absence of traditional normative structures. Uncritically committed to a dogmatic rationalism predicated on the unacknowledged liberal premises of abstract individualism, the economistic reduction of all social problems to uncontrolled capitalist greed or the irrationality of traditional residues, and the achievement of equality as the *summum bonum*, the Left still confuses real communities of autonomous individuals, bound by a common axiological framework, with the totally administered society, characterized by unrestricted inclusiveness, enforced rationality, and endless therapy for all dissidents. It is not an accident that the vindication of populism and federalism is considered to be a legitimation of irrationality and provincialism or, for those still believing in the metaphysics of "progress," regression and reaction.

The situation is not much better with what remains of the Right, which is even more fragmented and confused than the Left. When, in direct opposition to neo-conservatives, who dismiss it as a form of proto-fascism, populism is

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embraced by conservatives outside academia, it is usually as an excuse to shake off liberal encumbrances and to pave the way for precisely the sort of things the Left and the neo-conservatives fear the most: nativism, covert racism, religious dogmatism, and the kind of ethnocentrism which, in other parts of the world, has led to "ethnic cleansing." The same goes for federalism. It is accepted as a means to weaken the central government, only to be forgotten in favor of a nationalism seeking to reduce all particularity to an arbitrary, idealized standard (an Americanism hypostatized to the kind of WASP irredentism responsible for the genocide of Indians, slavery, xenophobia, etc.). Thus, within the remnants of the Right, a libertarian wing reducing all traditions to the cash-nexus coexists uneasily with a fundamentalist Christian wing seeking to shove the Bible down everyone's throat, paleoconservatives actually seeking to vindicate the virtues of a classical, pre-Welfare-State liberalism, and neo-conservatives concerned primarily with safegarding the *status quo* against further cultural decline.

Consequently, today *Telos* thrives outside a mainstream which mostly does not understand it, does not appreciate it, and, because of the widespread prosperity generated by new technological innovations, need not take it seriously. Safely mothballed in universities, most intellectuals write articles no one reads, debate issues no one cares about, and continue miseducating students in dire need of official certification (who are actually acculturated not by the universities, but by the culture industry). Seemingly obsessed with seeking to resolve self-perpetuating pseudo-problems of race, class, and gender, most intellectuals, posturing as the self-righteous opposition, while, in fact, legitimating the totally administered society, are even worse off than Gregor Samsa, who at least was troubled by his strange metamorphosis. Presumably, it beats the hell out of holding a regular 9-to-5 job. Within such a context, *Telos* remains the project of a few intellectuals and of a limited readership still interested in Truth, and optimistic that, despite the general cultural decline, there are still a lot of possibilities for a society so mesmerized by its material success to be able to ignore or even to formulate its spiritual impoverishment.

2. The Right-Left Split

You have devoted a whole issue to erasing the Right-Left split, which, in fact, seems more and more obsolete with regard to a certain number of emergent problems like globalization, federalism, ecology, etc. What do you see as the fundamental causes of the progressive dissolution of this old antagonism? Is it going to disappear completely or is it going to retain some political, economic, or intellectual — or perhaps even psychological and moral validity? Has this split had any significance in the past and, if so, what? Could we talk about "Left" and "Right" in the singular? On the other hand, how do the various strands of "Left" and "Right" differ? Would you still consider yourself to be on the "Left"? What designation would suit you best?

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The categories of "Left" and "Right" are paradigmatically modernist. It is not an accident that they date back to the French Revolution, and that they fade with the decline of modernity. In the early 19th century, the distinction referred primarily to the relation to the French Revolution, with the Right defending the *status quo ante*, and the Left the new bourgeois regime. Later, after it became clear that there was no way to restore the *ancien régime*, the categories came to characterize the split between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But, even that became obsolete with the development of social-democracy and the integration of the labor movement into the system at the turn of the century. Subsequently, the Bolshevik Revolution introduced a seven-decades long distortion, which only now is beginning to disappear, whereby Left and Right were identified with political regimes based respectively on capitalism and socialism. The capitalist turn in communist China and the predominance of social-democracy in the capitalist West indicate the extent to which the reduction of politics to economics presupposed by the distinction was a Cold War fraud. Consequently, after 1989, the distinction has become increasingly blurred: it lingers on by default, pending the development of better alternatives and of a political climate that will make it possible to recast the political in terms other than those deployed by the ruling elites. In other words, how to reconfigure the political is itself a political issue, whose outcome is a function of political struggle.

Today, the Left/Right split remains as an ideological smokescreen concealing the real distinction: between neo-liberals (as well as neo-conservatives) and communitarians. The former are committed to ever-growing state intervention, bureaucratic rationality, and the bourgeois values of abstract individuality, formal equality, social justice, representative liberal-democracy, and unrestricted inclusiveness. This is the ideology of the therapeutic New Class, camouflaging its axiological particularity as universal truth, proceduralizing politics, and privatizing morality. The hypostatizing of bourgeois values to universal truths warranting their imposition on dissidents, now degraded from political opponents to pathological or criminal cases, is part of that general process of depoliticization entailed by the liberal project from its very beginning: the reduction of politics to administration. The latter (communitarians) insist on local autonomy, direct democracy, cultural particularity, and traditional values of solidarity, belonging, and the identity of politics and morality. Opponents are neither pathologized or criminalized, but classified as "enemy" or "friend" and treated accordingly (within various kinds of confederal, federal, or international agreements) or ostracized, confronted, and, in extreme cases, maybe forcibly coerced.

This political realignment is only beginning to take shape in a world still overwhelmingly under a liberal hegemony that insists on reducing it to Left and Right. Yet, the communitarian/liberal distinction is by no means new; it dates back to the origin of modernity, and was articulated for decades at the turn of the last century in German sociology in terms of *Gemeinshaft* and *Gesellschaft*. More

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concretely, it is embodied in two fundamentally different political systems, which, unfortunately, have become increasingly confused in the 20th century: French statism and American federalism.

The liberal reduction of political to economic categories has meant a major distortion of the very relations of domination that the bourgeois revolution sought to eliminate. With the neutralization of politics into administrative proceduralism, economic domination became hypostatized to the only kind of domination, effectively occluding the much more pervasive political domination that characterizes the modern world. Contrary to the Panglossian claims of the communication theory of the "second generation" of the Frankfurt School, the political arena is not a seminar room where equal opportunity to participate guarantees democracy. It only guarantees democracy among those with sufficient cultural capital to participate. All others are, at best, represented by New Class spokesmen, who have no trouble translating and concretizing the vague and often confused sensibilities of the polity they claim to represent into part of their own agenda, thus systematically excluding them from the democratic process. This model was best embodied by the French Jacobin state which, under the pretense of safegarding the interests of an undifferentiated Third Estate, sought to destroy all cultural particularity, homogenize the population into an undifferentiated mass of abstract individuals (celebrated as "citizens"), and introduce a mode of bureaucratic domination more pervasive and effective than anything in the past. Bolshevism and Stalinism are only the most extreme expressions of this model, whose "new and improved" versions, with a human face, are the Welfare State and social-democracy.

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, *Telos* discussed these topics at length, through its "theory of artificial negativity," a long process which eventually led to the rediscovery of the original American federal model. Beginning with the concept of "the totally administered society," we accepted the claim of Marcuse and the first generation of the Frankfurt School that bureaucratic rationality managed to obliterate all opposition and turned into its opposite: generalized irrationality. What they had not understood fully, however, was how, ultimately, such an outcome was unstable and self-destructive. They had not grasped how this logic unfolded through the systematic obliteration of that cultural otherness which, in relation to the system, functioned effectively as a control mechanism to keep the bureaucratic apparatus relatively rational and efficient. Thus, the success of the many variations of the Jacobin model were caught in the contradiction that, the more they succeeded in expanding their bureaucratic mode of domination, the more they eroded essential control mechanisms, thereby undermining the conditions necessary for their effective reproduction. But these systems were far from collapsing, because, primarily in the US, the erosion of that cultural particularity was buffered by the development of a state-sponsored opposition. During the 1960s, in some form or other, practically all opposition movements were subsidized by the government, from students to civil rights groups. This "artificial

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negativity" was able to perform the same regulatory functions previously carried out by cultural particularity. Unfortunately, the "artificial" character of this negativity, i.e., the fact that it was inextricably bound with the bureaucratic apparatus, eventually embroiled it in the very corrupt dynamics it was meant to rectify, thus nullifying whatever regulatory role it was meant to perform.

For artificial negativity to be effective, it was necessary for it to be loosened from the bureaucratic apparatus as much as possible (as was done in the 1960s), and, in so doing, to allow the resurfacing of real oppositional cultural particularity *qua* authentic negativity. On the basis of these and related analyses, throughout the 1970s and 1980s *Telos* was probably the only journal to forewarn of the coming collapse of the Soviet and other East European regimes, not out of military defeat, as projected by the far Right and even by some deviant Leftists such as Cornelius Castoriadis, or as a result of the kind of internal workers' uprising fantasized by the few remaining Trotskyists, but because of terminal bureaucratic involution. The inevitability of the collapse was predicated on the fact that, unlike in the US, where artificial negativity and what Marcuse had labelled "repressive tolerance" forced the apparatus to retain a modicum of formal rationality, in the Soviet Union there was nothing of the kind. The result could only have been an accelerated unfolding of the trajectory of the crisis and a collapse under the weight of exceptional demands (the need to match Reagan's remilitarization strategy) and/or attempts to rationalize the system by liberalizing it (*glasnost* and *perestroika*). The same logic was seen to be operating in the US, where, however, hard-to-eradicate traditions of local autonomy and opposition to centralization played a powerful *katachontic* role, thus slowing the unfolding of the rationality crisis and providing time and space for radical internal reforms.

Through further reflection on this conflict between central power and local resistance, a topic at the time articulated most effectively by Christopher Lasch, *Telos* rediscovered the much maligned American populist tradition and, with it, *ante bellum* American federalism as a radical alternative to liberalism and Jacobinism. Such a model, eclipsed after the Civil War by Lincoln's centralist reinterpretation, was communitarian in character, predicated on Jeffersonianism and the kind of local autonomy and direct democracy of puritan New England. In fact, before the Civil War, the main political division was not between Left and Right, but between centralizers and Jeffersonians (and later their successors), i.e., between what today would be called neo-liberals and communitarians. In the late 18th century, the major debates concerning the drafting of the US Constitution were not about a presumably "progressive" Left and a conservative Right, but between those who wanted to preserve local autonomy, cultural particularity, direct democracy, and self-determination, and those wanting to create a strong central state with a powerful army and an integrated economy. Only after the Civil War, when the victorious North embarked on a project of rapid industrialization and nation-building, did the communitarian model embodied in the original federal

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system become progressively replaced by a variant of the French model, although such a project was never completed, as can be seen in the struggle over the status of the 10th Amendment, both in the Supreme Court and whatever public sphere remains outside the culture industry and the mass media.

The end of modernity and the delegitimation of Jacobinism renders Left and Right meaningless political categories, and paves the way for the reactivation of an even older American model which, today, is much more useful for understanding political dynamics. Events such as the recent uprisings against the WTO in Seattle make no sense if analyzed as either a Left or a Right phenomenon. Both the remaining socialist sectors of the Left and the far Right supporters of Pat Buchanan were violently against the proceedings, and a closer scrutiny of their motivations, with the exception of an opportunist organized labor seeking a self-serving protectionism, reveals deep communitarian longings and an attempt to regain a modicum of self-determination — despite all the questionable arguments put forth in defense of their particular positions. The same can be said about any number of issues, from abortion to pensions and health care. The imposition of the Left/Right interpretive grid only serves to distort these issues and to pose the problem solely in terms of alternative New Class ways of managing them, without ever challenging New Class rule.

Thus, despite the fact that there have been systematic efforts to redefine communitarianism as an upgraded version of the Left by various Etzionis and Sandels, it resists such academic reductions and finds expression in all sorts of new political phenomena difficult to interpret by means of the old dichotomy. While *Telos* does not have, and never has had a collective political position shared to the letter by all of its editors and collaborators, its political sympathies are predominantly communitarian in the above-discussed sense, which helps explain the consistency with which it is attacked by what remains of the doctrinaire Left and many *soi-disant* Rightists.

3. Carl Schmitt

Telos has published 2 special issues devoted to Carl Schmitt. Taking into consideration the fact that Schmitt has always been violently criticized by the representatives of the Frankfurt School (with the possible exception of Walter Benjamin), from the outside this "rediscovery" may have appeared surprising — at least for those not familiar with the fact that, e.g., in Italy Carl Schmitt has long been a point of reference for Left authors. This adds up to the fact that Carl Scmitt's thought seems distant from your editorial line with respect to several points. Schmitt is inspired by the counter-revolutionary tradition (Donoso Cortés), which certainly does not fit your profile. Because of his theory of sovereignty and of the homogeneity between representatives and represented, he is considered to be a thinker of the nation-state, while you support federalism. Finally, his geopolitical theory (confrontation of the "great maritime and continental spaces") led him

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to support a European "Monroe doctrine" and condemn all forms of American interventionism in Europe (which means that he would have disapproved of the war NATO waged against Serbia, which, on the other hand, you supported). How did your interest in Schmitt come about and what parts of Schmitt's thought have generated this interest? What aspects of his work do you consider obsolete, minor, and wrong? Have your special Schmitt issues provoked a debate among your readers and collaborators? How has all of this been received?

The members of the Frankfurt School were honest and intelligent people. But they were not perfect. Adorno's editing out Benjamin's footnote to Schmitt, and Otto Kirchheimer's refusal to allow George Schwab to write about Schmitt must rate among some of their lesser intellectual achievements, especially since this type of censorship could not possibly have worked and, in fact, had no impact in preventing the eventual introduction of Schmitt's ideas in the US.

There was nothing on Schmitt in English before 1970, when Schwab's book, *The Challenge of the Exception*, finally appeared, well after Kirchheimer had died in 1965 and could no longer prevent its publication. Yet, many *Telos* editors had been exposed to Schmitt's ideas even before the journal first appeared in 1968, through a quirk of fate. In the mid-1960s, Mitchell Franklin, a former Dean of Tulane University Law School, came to teach philosophy in SUNY at Buffalo. A member of the American legal team at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, Franklin had become acquainted with Schmitt's works, and they had made a great impression on him. As a hard-line Stalinist, Franklin regarded Schmitt as a major political adversary, whose brilliance made him all that more dangerous. Yet, Franklin never explained either what made Schmitt's work so profound or why it was so dangerous. Later, when one of our editors, Gary Ulmen, who was a close friend of Schwab and, through him, had not only become acquainted with Schmitt's work but also with Schmitt personally, suggested publishing a special issue on Schmitt, we jumped at the opportunity. Of course, there was considerable opposition to this project, mostly from our Habermasian editors, who knew only about Schmitt's Nazi past, but were unwilling to go any further with the matter. At the time, we knew nothing of the Italian Left's reception of Schmitt and, with the exception of a few editors who resigned shortly thereafter, we could not have cared less whether Adorno, Kirchheimer, or Habermas would have approved of such an undertaking.

Of course, along with everyone else who approaches Schmitt for the first time, we also tried to read him as a Nazi. It did not work. It made much more sense to read him as a profound critic of liberalism and as a political theorist. But even that did not lead us to Schmitt's more provocative and original ideas, since most of what is written on Schmitt focuses almost exclusively on the concept of the political and the critique of parliamentarism. Only later did we discover his constitutional theory, his vindication of *Ordnungsdenken*, his political theology,

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his reconstruction of the history of international law, his account of legality and legitimacy, his concept of *Grossraum*, etc. — positions having nothing to do with Nazism and which are extremely useful to analyze the contemporary world. Yet, we never read him as the theoretician of the nation-state. Even though Schmitt regarded the state as one of the major achievements of Western civilization, already in 1927, in *The Concept of the Political,* he realized that it was becoming obsolete as the locus of the political, after its instrumentalization by particular social interests. Subsequently, in the early 1930s, in his reflections on the development of the total state, things became even more complicated with the acknowledgement that such a state had become incapable of distinguishing between what is political and what is not.

By the time Schmitt drafted his political "Testament" (1943-44) — "The Plight of European Jurisprudence" — the era of the sovereign state was definitely over. At any rate, already in 1939 he had begun theorizing about *Grossräume* and the kind of geopolitical configurations that would obtain following WWII. While not exactly *Grossräume*, the two main "spheres of influence" that came into being with the onset of the Cold War testify to the sagacity of his views. In the age of the Internet, the nation-state lingers on as a political corpse waiting to be buried. The recent Haider scandal is only the latest indication of the obsolescence of national sovereignty — a conclusion *Telos* had reached much earlier, which explains, among other things, why we had published that part of *Verfassungslehre* dealing with "The Constitutional Theory of Federation." While Schmitt's view is that federations are inherently unstable, and either evolve into a national state or eventually disintegrate, we argued the opposite, i.e., that federations are the only kind of political organization which, while problematic and conflict-ridden, allow an heterogeneity of communities to coexist and to thrive without compromising any more of their cultural identity than they wish.

The business about "homogeneity" is more problematic and has been the subject of endless internal discussions. Practically all Schmitt detractors seeking to peg him as an unreconstructed Nazi invariably point to homogeneity — understood along ethnic and racial lines — as definite proof for their case. Yet, while Nazi ideologues invariably interpreted homogeneity in terms of race and ethnicity, such is not the case in Schmitt. The political unit is defined by its adherence to a common set of values, and the political itself has to do with the friend/enemy relations obtaining among political entities so defined. Schmitt's homogeneity is fundamentally axiological and not, at least on the surface, all that different from Habermas' *Verfassungspatriotismus*. The main difference, of course, is that, for Habermas, constitutional values are essentially the abstract norms of legal positivism, arbitrarily established through the free discussion of New Class intellectuals, while, for Schmitt, these values are embodied in an internalized traditional substratum which determines individual mentalities and is normally lived prereflectively, as part of the lifeworld.

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This question is all that more important in the US, where, from its very beginning as a political entity, ethnic and racial heterogeneity has always played a decisive role. This is why *Telos* has focused on federalism, understood not as the centralized administrative apparatus that the US federal system has become, but in the original sense of a minimalist government regulating the interaction of relatively autonomous political units. Anything like the present system, with its intrusive bureaucracy and endless regulations, intensifies the spiritual crisis associated with the substitution of consumerism and mass culture for that plethora of what Schmitt called "concrete orders" (and cannot be reduced to the now increasingly fashionable, state regulated "civil society"), without which society degenerates into nihilism, opportunism, and meaninglessness.

This reading of Schmitt, not as the theoretician of an imaginary sovereign state ruling over a racially and ethnically homogeneous nation, but as the political realist aware of the central role of decisions in politics, may help explain why the overwhelming majority of the editors supported NATO's intervention in Kosovo. It was neither a matter of enforcing "human rights," which are always excuses concealing hidden *realpolitische* agenda, nor of supporting "American imperialism." In fact, from the viewpoint of objective American national interests, intervention in Kosovo was an outright mistake by an administration with no clear vision of its international role. Within such a context, how are intellectuals with no political influence to behave in such a situation? Does it make sense to deal with this question in geopolitical terms, pretending to be agents of, or to speak for a US government one disagrees with on practically every issue? A more realistic and humble alternative was simply to take a moral stand based on the proposition that everything possible should be done by anyone to prevent genocide, or, at least, the sort of things that the Serbs were doing in Kosovo.

All arguments predicated on national sovereignty are disingenuous, especially when applied to a badly patched-up historical accident such as the former Yugoslavia, meeting none of even the most minimal criteria of common language, religion, values, customs, etc. to qualify as a viable political entity. While the justification for NATO intervention in terms of guaranteeing regional stability or "human rights" may not have been compelling, the defense of the ex-Yugoslavia's national sovereignty is even weaker. As for the kind of European *Grossraum* prefigured in Schmitt's writings, it was an interesting project, but hardly a political reality. *Telos* has supported European unification, but not as the creation of another centralized apparatus, duplicating already redundant national bureaucracies, all based on Delors' version of the Jacobin model. During the Kosovo crisis, it would have been much more appropriate for the EU to take responsibility for guaranteeing at least a minimal regional stability in the Balkans. But, so far, all the Brussels bureaucrats seem to be capable of doing is castigating what they perceive to be politically incorrect governments, such as the Austrian, or dictating how cheese should be made or wine bottled, in order to legitimate the

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various decrepit, social-democratic regimes in most of the EU countries. NATO intervention came about primarily because, having concluded that some action had to be taken, Europeans alone were unwilling, unprepared, and unable to do anything about what threatened to became yet another mini-Holocaust.

As for the reception of *Telos*' reading of Schmitt, it has been, predictably, negative. The academic establishment has not progressed much past the 1960s, when a Kirchheimer would exercise his authority to prevent students from reading and discussing Schmitt. As for the available English literature on Schmitt, with a few rare exceptions, they routinely chastise him as a Nazi, worthy only of scorn and condemnation. Any attempt at a balanced reading leaves the author open to the slander of being an extreme rightist, even in the case of scholars with impeccable liberal credentials such as Schwab and Bendersky. As long as Nazism and fascism are not regarded as closed historical chapters, Schmitt will remain the misunderstood *bête noir* he has been since the end of WWII, and American political thought will be the worse off because of it.

4. Globalization

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the country of "really existing socialism," the Soviet Union, we have been living under constantly changing historical conditions. Western capitalism seems to have lost all adversaries able to hinder its historical rise. The current technological turmoils (in biotechnology, telecommunication, computer science) give it a new vigor, symbolized since the 1990s by "globalization" and the "new economy." This globalization, however, has been the subject of contradictory interpretations. For some (such as Fukuyama), it means the "end of history," because the Western system (market-technology-human rights) will gradually expand throughout the world, with only local micro-nationalisms to compete with; for others (such as Huntington), modernization is not the same as Westernization (or Americanization), and we are moving toward a fragmentation of the world into big competing civilizations, which are the potential sources of numerous conflicts. What is your interpretation of globalization? How do you interpret the collapse of communism? What impact could a theory critical of this globalization have, taking into consideration the homogenizing power of the new mass media and the progressive disintegration of the old historical subjects of modernity (i.e., collectives acting in history: classes, peoples, etc.)? How would you describe the state of the world today?

It is interesting that, from the viewpoint of the French New Right, the post-communist era is interpreted in exactly the same terms as the hegemonic liberal Left: as an era when "Western capitalism seems to have lost all adversaries." This presupposes not only a reading of the 20th century as a struggle between capitalism and socialism (or between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the *de facto* ruling New Class effectively concealed), but also privileges economic over

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political or cultural categories in explaining the unfolding of recent events. Posing the question of globalization in these terms already implies as its only possible answer the prefiguration of an economic, rather than a political or cultural answer. As in the readings of orthodox Marxists, presumably the cultural-political superstructure will develop automatically out of the new economic base. When all is said and done, it will still be a matter of capitalism versus some form of socialism, or a system where the state somehow runs or regulates the economy. This economistic way of posing the question guarantees that the only viable answers will be those which cannot threaten the *status quo*.

But what if, following *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one approaches globalization in terms of the logic of modernity or, along with the libertarians, reduces capitalism merely to a neutral means? Then, the collapse of communism must be understood in rather different terms: as the misuse of that means, or as its degradation to one of its less efficient variations. What become primary are, first, the political decisions responsible for this misuse and degradation; and second, the cultural frameworks legitimating these political decisions. From this viewpoint, not only does recent history begin to look rather different from the way it is usually interpreted, but the future also loses its apocalyptic, gloom-and-doom character. Capitalism and globalization will cease to be cultural threats, not when the various, increasingly weak and irrelevant nation-states will be able to contain them, but only if particular cultures become once again sufficiently strong to produce autonomous individuals able to make rational choices. McDonald's will disappear from France, not because of Mr. Bové's raving and vandalism, but only when French food will be provided as fast and as efficiently to a discriminating population impossible to manipulate through the culture industry.

1989 did not mark merely the collapse of an inefficient and irrational mode of economic organization; it was the beginning of the decline of bureaucratic centralism as a pathological institutional reconfiguration of the Western project along hyper-rationalist lines, predicated on the eradication of all traditional cultural residues. Thus, the end of communism prefigures the end of modernity as the objectification of the Enlightenment project. Contrary to optimistic scenarios, such as Fukuyama's or Huntington's pessimistic forebodings concerning clashes of civilizations, globalization is neither a promise nor a threat. Today, in the age of the Internet, it is already history. Focusing on globalization as the *fons et origo malorum* is a Trojan Horse concealing a more fundamental problem having to do with the inability of traditional cultures to adapt quickly enough to new, objective world conditions, and the new relations of domination they have brought about. The cultural disintegration resulting from these developments paves the way for colonization of consciousness by the mass media and the culture industry. Those who see this purely as an economic phenomenon can only propose as remedies other purely economic measures accelerating, rather than inhibiting the cultural disintegration that originally precipitated the crisis. Socialism and other economic

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attempts to contain globalization can only worsen the inefficiency and corruption of an already over-bureaucrated capitalism, without in the least contributing to the reconstitution of the disintegrating cultures.

What accounts for this systematic distortion of the very formulation of the problem? Cultures disintegrate, and the remedies prescribed only seem to accelerate the disintegration. What has happened is that the problem of traditional cultures in the process of disintegration has become a bone of contention between "those who have," and are interested only in homogenizing people into manipulable consumers and compliant producers, and "those who know," who try to defend these people merely by transforming them into more discriminating consumers and better paid producers, rather than into active subjects able to reconstitute their culture. No matter who wins, particular cultures are doomed. Reduced to a squabble among different groups of modernizers, or to the question of globalization, the real issues never even surface. After all, from the modernist viewpoint, all traditional cultures are nothing but "superstition and myth," the quicker forgotten the better. It is not an accident that neither side in the recent Seattle struggle about the future of the WTO could suggest any viable solution for the crisis they sought to address, and there was no coherence whatsoever within either of the two camps.

Except for instances of military conquest or the kind of reckless colonial expansion following the discovery of the New World, globalization can have detrimental consequences only in a context of prior cultural and political disintegration. In the same way that McDonald's can undersell French food only because of efficiency and if local consumers have forgotten how to discriminate between industrially prepared ground meat and *fois gras*, capitalist penetration everywhere in the world is possible only if local conditions allow it. Natives will not work cheaply for Nike in Mexico or Indonesia if they can make a better living some other way. As Rudolf Hilferding pointed out almost a century ago, given the logic of capitalist development, the huge discrepancy between working conditions and wages, between, e.g., undeveloped or destroyed countries, can only be temporary, as the trajectory of the post-WWII German and Japanese economies or those of Taiwan and South Korea have demonstrated.

Even in the worst case scenario, it is unlikely that globalization will bring about nothing but the homogenization of the world, the degradation of all people into abstract individuals, the increasing domination of the center over the periphery, or the reduction of all social relations to the cash-nexus. No society can thrive as a mere aggregation of abstract individuals interacting solely as rational economic agents. As Sartre emphasized even at the lowest points of his fellow-travelling days, the old theory of alienation stipulated not only that the logic of commodification can never erase all subjectivity, but that, long before it approaches universalization, it triggers counter-tendencies. The current resurgence of concerns with ethnicity, religious revivals, localism, etc. are only some of the symptoms of a more general reaction to the crisis of modernity and the

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desperate search for alternatives. Contrary to the forebodings of all the Cassandras identifying globalization and the crisis of modernity, the overcoming of the latter will not mean the reversal of the former, the overthrow of capitalism, or the development of radically different economic alternatives. Postmodern capitalism will thrive even more than the modernist variety, and will have no trouble adopting to communitarian frameworks or federated systems predicated on direct democracy and autonomous individuality, while post-modern versions of socialism or statism are not likely to be any more successful than their predecessors.

Today's contradictions of material prosperity coexisting with spiritual misery, growing economic inequality, geopolitical chaos, and the disintegration of a Western rationalism that has lost its grounding are first and foremost cultural and political phenomena. They are the product of dislocations requiring rapid adaptations and innovations from slow-changing cultures whose legitimacy, however, can in no way be challenged by the instrumental rationality of modernity. That Enlightenment through which modernity dismissed all other traditional cultures as "superstition and myth" is itself grounded on foundations no more legitimate or universal than those of any other culture. Thus, it is only a matter of how effectively these traditional cultures can *integrate* science and technology, rather than modernizing out of existence altogether. There is no incompatibility between monotheism and the computer, or nuclear physics and mysticism. Since living cultures develop organically, their adaptation of the latest scientific and technological innovations need not necessarily mean "Americanization," understood as the adaptation and substitution of a flashy foreign culture for local ones — the real fear of all those who demonize globalization as a covert Americanization of the world.

When all is said and done, "Americanism" is not a culture, but an attitude. Contrary to European misperceptions, "America" is no alternative to Europe, but its future. It is the sum total of European cultures and others trying to coexist in a world where homogeneous or homogenizing nation-states no longer make sense. Although they have become the best known symbols of a political laboratory whose work is far from done and often misdirected, Hollywood in not the US and Coca-Cola is just another soft-drink. As the prosperity of advanced industrial societies depresses birth-rates and encourages immigration from less-developed societies, they will all confront the US cultural predicament and the kind of problems in the process of being resolved in the New World. That is when, from being perceived as a problem, Americanism may well become the solution.

5. Federalism, Populism

Two themes often appear on the pages of *Telos*, especially in your writings: federalism and "populism." Those two political theories, which are coming back in full force after the decline of socialism and nationalism, have been defined and interpreted in different and often contradictory ways. How would you define your "populist federalism"? Does it continue past tendencies or doctrines? Who

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are its theoreticians? Is "populism" a modern or post-modern phenomenon (post-modernity representing the passage from the world of peoples, states, and nations to the world of continents, communities, and "networks")? What precisely is the main adversary of this "New Class," often designated by populism? What do you think about the emergence of an "Alpine/Central European populism," combining an economic ultra-liberalism with forms of identitarian vindications, sometimes bordering on xenophobia (Haider, Lega Nord, etc.)? What do you think of the evolution of the American federal state?

Federal populism or *populist* federalism is nothing new. Any analysis of the original meaning of either "populism or "federalism" immediately reveals that genuine federalism presupposes populism, and that a viable populism can be articulated politically only within a federal framework. In today's brave new world of political science, however, they have come to mean the opposite. Generalizing from a particularly traumatic historical experience, the Civil War, American political thought has managed to transform these concepts so that they now conform to the ruling ideology, whose main objective since that time has been the erosion of what was distinctive and original in the American political system: direct local democracy and minimal centralized government.

Thus, today, in ordinary discourse, federalism in the US (as well as in the European debates about the future configuration of the EU) has come to refer to the centralization of power, which explains why there is so much opposition to it. Originally, it meant precisely the opposite: a contractual arrangement among autonomous political entities to better manage matters of mutual concern: defense, foreign policy, commerce, money, etc. The semantic shift in the US dates back to the post-Civil War period, when the victorious North criminalized the defeated South as "rebels" and deprived it, along with the rest of the states in the federation, of the sovereignty and prerogatives that the federal Constitution was meant to guarantee. At that time, federalism began to refer no longer to the limited authority of the centralized government over the various federating units concerning a clearly spelled-out number of tasks, but to the unlimited hegemony of the center over the states, now practically degraded to mere administrative branches.

The same happened to populism. In response to the unbearable new relations of domination imposed after the Civil war, not only by Washington, but, even more, by Northern industrial and financial interests, populism came about in the South and the Midwest as local reactions attempting to vindicate the kind of cultural, economic, and political particularity in the process of being eradicated. Unfortunately, it came to include extra-legal groups, such as the Klu Klux Klan, initially formed as self-defense organizations meant to redress the inevitable injustices of the Northern occupation forces and their successors. D. W. Griffith's famous film, "Birth of a Nation," did so good of a job in depicting the original self-defense character of the Klan, to the point of de-emphasizing its subsequent

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terrorist and xenophobic involution, and thus implicitly condoning both the brutality of slavery and the Klan's role, that eventually the film was dismissed as paradigmatically racist and an apology for White Supremacy. Worse yet, populism's localist and regionalist character gradually gave way to universalist pretenses, thus sealing the fate of the movement as terminally authoritarian, undemocratic, and racist. Until Lawrence Goodwyn and Christopher Lasch set the record straight, American political science (especially after the publication of Seymour Martin Lipset's influential text, *Political Man* and Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*) interpreted populism as a proto-fascist movement threatening, rather than defending American political ideals. Old stereotypes, however, are difficult to correct. Thus, even today social-democratic historians such as Michael Kazin insist on presenting American populism as the forerunner, rather than the opposition to the massive political centralization brought about by Progressivism and the New Deal.

This diabolical semantic reversal of the meaning of populism and federalism has, since that time, played a clear ideological role in helping to displace the primacy of democracy and federalism of the original American political model in favor of the liberalism and nationalism of the current liberal-democracy, without having to acknowledge any breaks in continuity with the 1776 US Constitution — a clear-cut case of what Schmitt described as "legal revolutions." More generally, the American Civil War exemplifies the kind of problems bedeviling federations. The inevitable tension between the central government and the federal units tends to resolve itself, in exceptional cases involving, e.g., the fate of industrialization in the US, with the disintegration of the federation, its evolution into a unitary state, and the violent subjugation of the separatist units by the rest of the federation (i.e., what a disintegrating Yugoslav federation has attempted, but has not been able to accomplish). It worked in the US in the mid-19th century, when it became impossible to negotiate peacefully about the political implications of Northern industrialization, its relation to the Southern agrarian economy, and the abolition of slavery. It is an irony of history that, almost a century and a half later, the US has intervened in the Balkans through NATO to prevent the very same kind of development that has drastically changed its role in the 20th century: from a paradigm of freedom and self-determination into an imperialist super-power.

This does not mean that, in some way, subsequent developments were not possible outcomes of efforts to resolve ambiguities inherent in the US Constitution. Such a fundamental document could not prefigure every possible development and, consequently, contains conflicting elements which can be the subject of politically contradictory interpretations. While not in principle irreconcilable, when identified with particular socio-economic interests or regions, these contradictory interpretations can polarize the federation, resulting in a violent confrontation through which one side imposes its particular interpretation by force. This is precisely what happened in the US in the 19th century, but not in Yugoslavia at

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the end of this century. The hermeneutic problem undermining the federal character of the US Constitution is built into the very structure of the document, which privileges states' prerogatives in all instances not specifically assigned to the federal government, while simultaneously guaranteeing individual rights and empowering the center to do everything necessary to carry out its assigned tasks. Since practically everything is in some way or other related to federal tasks, such as the regulation of commerce, it is not difficult to imagine how the federation could be transformed readily into a *de facto* unitary state under the proper political-historical conditions.

Since the conclusion of the Civil War, the combination of an expanding Northern capitalism and a growing New Class necessary to run the central administrative apparatus has been attempting to transform the US federation into a nation-state, against widespread grass-roots resistance. Although never elegantly articulated and often embroiled with questionable practices, such as racism, xenophobia, etc., this resistance has proven surprisingly strong. It could be defeated decisively only under emergency conditions, such as economic crises of the magnitude of the Great Depression and various wars — the two cases which have contributed the most to the disintegration of American federalism and to a massive centralization of power in Washington. Thus, while distorted beyond recognition by an intelligentsia whose very existence has become inextricably tied to the fate of the central government, and constantly eroded by the "motorized legislation" it incessantly produces, populist federalism thrives in American small towns and as part of whatever can be described as "Americanism" — despite the fact that its most spectacular expressions tend to be what the central government and the mass media invariably succeed in criminalizing as "isolated" pathological cases: Waco, the Oklahoma bombing, the Unabomber, etc.

This federalism has very few astute theoreticians, usually marginalized out of academia or even within the government, when they accidentally manage to rise to positions of power and prestige as part of questionable extraneous agendas (e.g., Clarence Thomas). While generally dismissed by modernist ideologues as a pre-modern residue hindering the development of an all-encompassing world government — the new, post-modern totalitarianism with a human face — the traditional version of federalism promises to make a comeback. With the unraveling of a modernism held together by consumerism, hedonism, and the remnants of traditional cultures, particularity resurfaces by default, as the only viable means to deal with what, from an altogether different perspective, Habermas described years ago as the motivational crisis and its institutional otherness: the rationality crisis. Only well-regrounded traditional values can provide an alternative to the nihilism and meaninglessness inherent in modernity. The return of authentic federalism is further necessitated by the fact that the very stability of the "totally administered society" requires this kind of "negativity" as an internal regulatory mechanism guaranteeing system rationality, which explains all the

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academic chatter about depoliticized theoretical placebos such as "civil society" and multiculturalism, understood as oxymorons meant to mainline particularity as state-sponsored projects. In the long run, however, their artificial character only strengthens the central state, thus accelerating, rather than contributing to the solution of the crisis of modernity.

Both civil society and multiculturalism are New Class devices to contain particularity within the predominant relations of domination by recasting and defusing whatever oppositional charge cultural particularity may have. Strict government regulation of the voluntary associations constituting civil society through fiscal policy, state financing, and, when all this fails, outright repression or enforced privatization, ensures that none of the grass-roots dissatisfaction translates into effective political challenges. It is not an accident that even the most local of neighborhood associations turn out to be training grounds for wannabe bureaucrats, and that whenever religious institutions or groups seek to translate moral tenets into political demands they are immediately ghettoized out of the public domain by appealing to contrived, strict readings of the constitutional separation of church and state. Similarly, by universalizing and, therefore, immunizing against any challenges liberal values such as human rights, formal equality, and abstract individuality, the liberal deployment of multiculturalism and civil society reduces cultural particularity to gastronomical idiosyncrasies and folkloristic details. Substantial cultural traits, such as patriarchal family structure, strict sexual codes, hierarchical authority, unusual religious practices, etc. are all routinely trumped by the enforcement of liberal values hypostatized to universal norms and constantly translated into legal injunctions. Far from being neutral, this universality is the ideology of the New Class, and it entitles those who have access to it — professionals, experts, intellectuals, etc. — to enforce it on whomever deviates from its mandates. Consequently, any vindication of authentic cultural particularity immediately confronts this New Class as its enemy — an extremely powerful, but morally bankrupt enemy, with no teleology other than the instrumental generalization of the current nihilism, hedonism, and meaninglessness that, in its more lucid moments, it does not really believe in.

As for the possibility of the development of an "Alpine/Central European populism," *Telos* is the only journal in the US which has devoted special issues to Lega Nord and the French New Right. The reason for this is that these expressions of a resurgent European (not "Alpine/Central European," which smells too "Aryan" for comfort) populism seemed for a while to be the most promising candidate to undermine the terminally corrupt European central states and to reconfigure Europe as a federation of much smaller regions or localities able to practice direct democracy and to articulate a genuine cultural particularity. Cultural particularity, however, does not refer to a closed universe, but to a dynamic tradition, inevitably engaged in a continuous dialogue with other similar cultures, and able to learn and to change organically as a result. In other words, this means

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that Lombards in Italy accept the Sicilians living among them as their equals, Saxons in Germany regard the local Turks as their peers, and Bretons in France respect Algerian immigrants as permanent neighbors.

Communities have nothing to do with race and ethnicity, but with their particular histories, modes of interaction, institutional orders embodying common values, and a shared future. Far from becoming more ethnically, racially, or linguistically homogeneous, these communities are heading in the opposite direction. There is nothing undesirable about a Normandy with some of the Normans speaking different Arabic dialects in addition to French, wearing whatever public attire they deem appropriate (within the parameters of common decency), praying in Mosques or respecting the Sabbath. These ever more common types of ethnically and racially diverse communities are inevitably conflict-ridden. The conflicts they confront, however, need not be destructive. The time when Romeo and Juliet die in the closing act is over. Nowdays, they may divorce, or Romeo may have an affair with his secretary, but, more often than not, they live happily ever after. As with the early Middle Ages, when paganism gradually faded into a flexible Christianity able and willing to integrate it, or with the American experience of the productive co-existence and interaction of a large variety of peoples, Europe will be all that stronger with new, ethnically, linguistically, and racially heterogeneous organic communities unencumbered by a New Class universalizing everyone into conformity.

A Europe of such regions and communities will also be able to compete more effectively with the US and other future geopolitical powers. Despite its own bureaucratic involution and attempt to adopt a Jacobin model, the US, because of its deeply ingrained traditions of local autonomy and individual responsibility, remains much more free and open than any European country, and has been able to achieve an economic dynamism and a cultural hegemony Europe will be able to match if and only if it federalizes along populist lines. Unfortunately, the ghost of Nazism still hounds Europe. Even more than in the US, any efforts to reconstruct the continent along regional lines will be branded tendentially fascist. Of course, Haider's unnecessary provocations about the Nazi full employment policies or the personal integrity of some of the SS personnel do nothing to discourage these charges, any more than do Bossi's opportunism, corruption and bombast. In time, however, these populist movements may develop a better quality of leaders. If they do, Europe may well be on the way of transcending its "weaker sister" status *vis à vis* its stronger brother across the ocean.

6. Communitarians-Liberals/ Intellectual Debate in the US

Since the publication of John Rawl's *A Theory of Justice*, about 30 years now, political and moral philosophy in the US seems to have had a revival, whose quality, seriousness, and breadth has created a situation rather different from that of political science in Europe. The most popular debate contraposed communitarians

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(Sandel, McIntyre) to liberals (Dworkin, Rawls), but there are also other tendencies, like the "republicans" (Strauss, Skinner), the "populists" (Lasch), the "libertarians," the "paleoconservatists," the "neoconservatists," etc. From a European perspective, where such debates over ideal political form are clearly less numerous, and sometimes even non-existent, such a breadth remains a dream. What is your opinion about these scholarly debates? To which tendency is *Telos* closest? What are the essential splits in American political philosophy today?

As the saying goes, the grass always looks greener on the other side. Contrary to what one can infer from the myriad of journals and views circulating in the US, it would be a mistake to conclude that political thought is thriving. The success of Rawl's book is due primarily to the fact that he has developed precisely the kind of theoretical apology that the American Welfare State needed: a purely procedural account based on allegedly universally-valid premises. Habermas has been trying to do roughly the same thing in Europe with communication theory.

Classical liberalism did not allow for the kind of government expansion necessary to introduce the New Deal and its later versions: the New Frontier and the Great Society. Individualism, minimal government, personal freedom, etc. were all values that the Welfare State had to compromise in order to operate. Fascism and Marxism-Leninism did exactly the same thing in Europe. In openly breaking with bourgeois liberalism, both of them confronted huge legitimation problems that they tried to resolve by recycling custom-made versions of earlier traditions or by outright repression — strategies which were never all that successful and kept the various regimes that deployed them mired in permanent legitimation crises.

The American strategy was much more sophisticated. By denying any radical break with classical liberalism, it managed to retain an unbroken continuity with the past, while bringing about social and political changes as significant as those of fascism and Marxism-Leninism. Thus, it avoided any legitimation crisis and did not have to deploy anything close to the repression unleashed by the other regimes. These are the conclusions reached by the Frankfurt School in the early 1940s, before its break-up and the return to Europe of most of its members. Unable and unwilling to vindicate terminally compromised traditions, they sought to ground their critique in psychology (*The Authoritarian Personality*) or psychoanalysis (*Eros and Civilization*), thus further confusing and compromising the integrity of their analyses.

Despite the efforts of the older Dewey and his followers, traditional pragmatism which, up to the early part of the 20th century, had successfully theorized the American federal and populist experience, could not legitimate the New Deal without simultaneously self-destructing. The separation of the axiological dimension and its objectifications into community life from a political arena understood, not as the depoliticized administrative squabbles it has become, but in terms of friend/enemy relations to be negotiated at the federal level, could no longer be

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maintained. As a project meant to rationalize the federal system by centralizing many of the previously local social functions, the New Deal needed a much more solid justification for displacing that traditional axiological dimension that had been the *de facto* foundation of the whole system. In attempting to develop such a viable theoretical foundation, the older Dewey and his followers scientized pragmatism by substituting science for the traditional *doxa* of the various communities and denominations. This meant the self-destruction of pragmatism into a sophisticated version of positivism plus social engineering. This left the American Welfare State without any legitimating moral and political philosophy.

Rawls managed to fill this gap with a theory of justice replete with enthymemes which are hardly ever exposed by his critics. In fact, despite all that has been written on it, with few exceptions the discussion has remained safely within statist parameters. This helps explain why public discourse uncritically assumes the universal validity of particular values, such as "inclusiveness," the criminalization of "hate speech," "human rights," etc. — all values guaranteeing axiological homogeneity and the kind of citizenry the managerial state can best administer. By pretending to protect the most vulnerable members of society, Rawl's theory of justice legitimates a Welfare State which disempowers all cultural particularity inconsistent with it, by either criminalizing or pathologizing it. Far from having encouraged debate concerning moral and political matters, it has tended to stifle debate by relegating it solely to what this theory considers to be legitimate discourse. Thus, it is not surprising that it is impossible to raise questions concerning differences among the races or to discuss the possibility that Nazi ideology may have been "rational."

Discussion is extremely difficult also among groups with relatively close outlooks. Thus, e.g., no rational debate was possible between paleoconservatives and communitarians concerning the Kosovo war, with any timid attempt immediately degenerating into hysterical outbursts. Even within particular groups sharing many views, it is often difficult to engage in rational debates. This is not an unusual predicament. The only positive feature in the US, which may differentiate it from Europe, is that a long-standing tradition of free speech makes it very easy to publicize even the most disparate opinions and ideas. Thus, Americans are routinely shocked to discover that most European countries have laws criminalizing, e.g., the denial of the Holocaust or the reconstruction of fascist parties, despite the fact that the US government has been trying to do exactly the same thing, only to be rebuffed by Supreme Court decisions. As long as the Stock Market and the economy stay healthy, moral and political debates, if and when they occur, quickly fade into academic irrelevance.

Any cursory scrutiny of the differences between the two main political parties or of the issues debated during the presidential campaign readily reveals how depoliticized American politics has become. While some general differences remain between statists — barricaded within the Democratic Party — and anti-statists —

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usually associated with the Republican Party — they do not translate into the ideological split between liberals and communitarians. In fact, most communitarians, from Kazin to Etzioni to Sandel, operate within the Democratic Party orbit, while traditional liberals of all shades (especially the neo-conservatives) are found generally within the Republican Party. Given this state of affairs, there is no clear location for the kind of positions *Telos* has taken. In defending local autonomy, participatory democracy, and traditional values, the journal remains a political anomaly within a confused and anomalous political context.

7. Multiculturalism and "politically correct"

During the 1990s, two dominant images of the US have crossed the Atlantic. The first one is "multiculturalism," i.e., the idea that the civil link would be gradually replaced by "communitarian" links of an ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual, etc. nature. The modern image of equality steps aside when confronted with the desire to recognize identities. In figurative terms, the "salad bowl" replaces the "melting pot." The second American vogue is "politically correctness" (PC). This academic and media-generated mania to euphemize language, to extend indefinitely the field of "discrimination" (by sex, race, opinion, weight, age, etc.) to accord a moral super-legitimacy to all past or present "victims" of the "Western white man" by rewriting all of history in the name of minorities. What do you think of these two phenomena? Do they still have a future? What about the extraordinary success of "deconstructionism" (Derrida, etc.) in American universities? What do you think of the current situation of the new feminism in the US (the phenomenon of "gender studies," etc.)? Simultaneously, what is your position concerning the undeniable return of infra-national collective identities in the US as well as in Europe?

It would be a serious political mistake to interpret multiculturalism as a communitarian phenomenon. Far from recognizing and legitimating cultural particularities, by subsuming them under "political correctness," multiculturalism actually tends to homogenize whatever cultural particularity has managed to survive the "Americanization" of a few generations past — the well-documented nationalist and assimilationist policies of Progressivism and of the New Deal. Such a politically correct multiculturalism is a far cry from the kind of communitarian and federalist arrangement envisioned by the "founding fathers" when they drafted the US Constitution and which, despite its erosion during the past century and a half, remains the most distinct feature of American specificity. While, in the first half of the 19th century, the plurality of particular communities was primary and the federal superstructure secondary, politically correct multiculturalism reverses priorities and forces whatever there is left of cultural particularity to conform to the requirements of a Welfare-State liberalism. It has worked surprisingly well in upholding the appearance of a cultural pluralism, while systematically

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homogenizing society to conform to the requirements of a capitalist system based on mass production, national distribution, and a culture industry mediating between profitable production and manipulated consumption. To the extent that it treats all cultures and differences, no matter how arbitrary and superficial, as organizing principles for the voluntary associations of a civil society well modulated by the central state, multiculturalism must be seen as a "corporatist," rather than as a "communitarian" phenomenon.

A multiculturalism predicated either on immutable characteristics, such as age, gender, and race, or on tastes in "sexual preference," clothing, music, and gastronomy may aggregate people according to nature or fashion, but not to those distinct political criteria that constitute real communities. Cultures are internalized, all-encompassing ways to relate to the world, codified into moral and juridical forms whose institutionalization constitutes communities as political entities. While they can and do assimilate new members, they are not reducible to voluntary associations. Since these ways to relate to the world are often objectified into religion and values, their exclusion by Welfare-State liberalism from institutions, legal structures, and public life dooms them to irrelevance. Social interaction and public behavior are now homogenized by the state and the culture industry, while pretending to emanate from an increasingly marginalized pluralistic society. This contradictory predicament is best exemplified by the advertising industry, which constantly encourages everyone to be different and to express this difference by purchasing exactly the same commodity. The rugged individualism of American mythology can now be articulated primarily in the shopping mall. Everything else risks being branded as politically incorrect, calling for therapeutic intervention.

As an inconsequential typology of the aggregation of people according to arbitrary differences, multiculturalism does not designate the kind of political organization necessary to institutionalize communitarianism, but, at best, a sophisticated marketing device segmenting the population into particular categories of consumers. Reduced to another set of irrelevant differences, real cultural particularity, having to do with values and identity, are marginalized in a society ruled by the allegedly universal values of the liberal establishment. This universalist pretense has the unintended consequence of privileging equality over freedom, and of interpreting all inequality irreducible to nature as the result of injustice. Victimology becomes the guiding principle of liberal social policy when this universalistic morality is applied retroactively and all past behavior, now deemed politically incorrect, is automatically criminalized. This is how slavery, a normal condition in the ancient world — so common that practically everyone today has ancestors who at some time or other were slaves — is now demonized as the worst of all crimes. Treating people as anything but pure abstract individuals is branded as unacceptable discrimination.

Thus, a politically and morally correct present not only becomes the measure of the past as a history of injustices and crimes, but is also confronted with the

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task of having to uncover and to purge the present of all flawed incrustations from the past. Deconstruction becomes fashionable as the way to retrace how this retroactively projected injustice came to be objectified into institutional or customary practices, from the viewpoint of a dogmatically accepted political correctness. Its popularity is based on its automatic deployment of particular liberal values, whose purely procedural status allegedly establishes their universal validity and warrants ubiquitous application. It is the most extreme expression of the dialectic of Enlightenment and of what the late Adorno called "identity logic."

Since the past always presents itself as immensely complex, necessitating interpretative ordering, it can be approached also from post-colonial or feminist viewpoints. These approaches legitimate particular political positions, and their success is largely a function of the actual unfolding of power politics and how it is managed to guarantee the New Class' cultural hegemony. The current popularity of postcolonial, feminist, and various other historiographies has little to do with the relegitimation of voices previously silenced within the official histories written by the winners, but with the corporatist strategy of constituting a variety of groups vying for recognition and concessions by a mediating central state, whose legitimacy is thereby automatically guaranteed. The demonization of fascism after WWII has resulted in its almost exclusive identification with authoritarianism and brutality, thus preventing any serious scrutiny of its actual social policies. As a result, when these policies resurface, free of any outright brutality and authoritarianism, they are not recognized for what they are. This is how, in the US, New Class corporatism has been able to pass for communitarianism and, in the process, to contribute to the further obliteration of whatever authentic communitarianism still thrives in rural enclaves or in a political tradition extremely difficult to corrupt.

8. Europe, the Left, the European Union

Telos has followed closely the big intellectual and political debates in Europe. This is rare, and deserves to be emphasized as well as appreciated! You have published very critical texts about the European Left, whose doctrinal weakness and inclination, particularly in France, to indulge in witch-hunts and symbolic lynchings you have often condemned. What is your opinion of the evolution of the Left in Europe — both politically (Blair's or Schröder's "third way") and intellectually (the lack of leading figures, with the possible exception of Habermas)? More generally, what do you think of the construction of the European Union, where the recent "Haider affair" has shown that it was not taking the direction of a federalism "from below"? At present, this Union seems to be reproducing, on a higher level, all the faults of national bureaucracies, which, in turn, triggers the return of various nationalisms: what do you see as the best model for Europe? Finally, what role is Russia likely to play, in the coming years, with respect to its economic needs, its geopolitical interests, and its political and cultural traditions?

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The European Left has been in crisis ever since the Bernstein debate at the turn of the last century. The outcome of that debate: the social-democrats' acceptance of the integration of the labor movement, was challenged most forcefully by an extreme Left, headed by Lenin and Luxemburg, which, instead of merely a "more just" bourgeois society, demanded something qualitatively new. The historical irony is that the new man communist society sought to produce turned out to be a state-dependent individual: nothing more than a bad carbon copy of his bourgeois counterpart, allegedly responsible for all social evils, minus any sense of responsibility, initiative, and originality. Lenin dreamed of a society running as efficiently as the Post Office: unfortunately, that is precisely what happened. At any rate, in both the social-democratic and the Bolshevik case, the degradation of culture — especially traditional culture — to a superstructural epiphenomenon guaranteed the reproduction of the same, if not worse kind of abstract individuality generated by bourgeois society. The Left only accelerated the dynamics described in *The Communist Manifesto*. Those segments of the Left which rejected the Jacobin model and sought a genuine communitarian alternative (e.g., Gustav Landauer or, later, some of the council communists), while always intellectually attractive, were readily marginalized and never had any significant political impact. As a result, despite its claims to the contrary, throughout the 20th century the official Left has not managed to develop any radical alternative to bourgeois society. In the most extreme cases, as in the Soviet Union and Cambodia, it has only driven the logic of modernity to its most absurd and horrible consequences.

Terminally committed to the Enlightenment, the Left has contraposed knowledge to economic capital — the Party to the owners. The construction of the history of the past two centuries as an economic struggle between two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, has effectively occluded another, more consequential struggle between the bourgeoisie and the New Class. Socialism has generally meant the expropriation of the former by the latter, with the interests of the "proletariat" or the "oppressed" used as an excuse to reconfigure the predominant relations of domination. This does not mean that, e.g., human suffering has not diminished or that nothing has changed, but that the causal pattern is rather different from the one usually depicted by the hegemonic ideology. In this sense, Blair's and Schröder's "third way" is nothing new: only the most recent reconfiguration of the redistributive ideology of the New Class, after the Soviet collapse demonstrated once again the ineluctability of capitalist relations. Today, the European Left is not all that different from the Democratic Party in the US, with no claim to legitimacy beyond the quality of its performance. Bernstein said that the movement was everything; the *telos*, nothing. Now, the *telos* is even less, and the movement has been reduced to a badly managed corporatist compromise between the irreconcilable interests of feminists, ecologists, labor-unions, various minorities, etc. The "third way" is yet another New Class master-plan to survive in the 21st century.

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Not surprisingly, under social-democratic leadership, the European Union is looking more and more like another bureaucratic nightmare. The communitarian alternative of a strong federal Europe of communities unencumbered by national states is as likely to come about as a US based on its original constitutional model. Despite all the warnings about Europe becoming a bad carbon-copy of the US in its worst sense, that is precisely what is happening. Since the European Right is even more committed to the primacy of nation-states than the Left, communitarian prospects in this regard are less than dim. The Haider affair indicates the extent of the intolerance for any deviation from the norm. Even though Haider was no alternative to anything other than proper political rhetoric and an intelligent choice of euphemisms, its demonization is a measure of Europe's *de facto* conservatism. Fear to replicate a past not yet fully understood translates into a political paralysis guaranteeing the indefinite extension of present social pathologies into the future.

As for Russia, its prospects are even worse. To the extent that seven decades of Bolshevik rule have done immense, but maybe not irreparable damage to its traditional cultures, any communitarian recovery is going to take even longer than in the rest of Europe. Delusions of grandeur, of being the kind of superpower it never was, further inhibit any cultural recovery. Like the Ottoman Empire a century earlier, Russia will remain "the sick man of Europe," bungling from Nagorno-Karabaks to Chechnyas, vainly trying to reconcile imperialist dreams with modernizing imperatives. Unlike the American tradition of 19th century populism, its Russian counterpart always had a strong New Class component. Consequently, Russia lacks the kind of historical precedents it could attempt to reactivate in prefiguring a postmodern communitarian future. Thus, it is faced with a road even more rocky than those the EU and the US will have to negotiate in the years ahead.

9. Europe and the US

Since the end of the Soviet system, the US has been the only great world power. Its superiority is obvious in all fields — military, economic, technological, financial, etc. This superiority translates into what is often considered to be, especially in France, hegemony. The products of the American cultural industry (films, songs, television shows, etc.) are becoming more and more popular, thus marginalizing local productions. Great international organizations (IMF, World Bank, NATO, WTO, etc.) are considered to be tools of American foreign policy; financial markets use the dollar, etc. Do you think this critique of American hegemonism is justified, at least on some points, or is it just the expression of resentment by countries unable to adapt to new situations? What do you have to say about the "anti-Americans" coming from the European continent? Does "Atlanticism" still make sense, now that the Soviet Union has disappeared? How do you see the future evolution of relations between Europe and the US: natural convergence or an unavoidable divergence of interests?

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American cultural hegemony today can be seen everywhere. What it means, however, is often misunderstood. The usual explanation is that it is the result of economic power and the consequent ability to coerce the rest of the world into accepting it. The standard nationalist reaction everywhere, then, is to call for a boycott, to close the borders and do everything possible to keep the Yankees out. That is a mistake, since, in the age of instant communication, it cannot actually succeed and, when all is said and done, American culture today is *world* culture. Because of its economic clout and the kind of favorable conditions it affords artists, scientists, scholars, etc., it is able to draw the best from everywhere in the world. Despite the fact that, like all bureaucratic centralist societies, the US is also burdened with severe fiscal restrictions, regulations of all kinds, and myriads of everyday administrative annoyances, when compared to other countries, it looks immensely better: it is less corrupt, more open, and generally much freer than anywhere else. Naturally, the world's best talent and financial resources tend to converge here and contribute to the kind of cultural hegemony the rest of the world then resents.

The openness of American society has nothing to do with any benevolence or superior competence on the part of its bureaucrats or its ruling New Class. It is the result of the resilience of its traditions of individual responsibility and local autonomy. Despite concerted efforts for over a century to homogenize ("Americanize") American society, local traditions remain strong. Even the federal bureaucracy, with all its might, has a great deal of difficulty in eroding local government. Unlike in Europe, where the French Revolution took place *against* traditions, the American Revolution was fought to *guarantee* local autonomy and self-determination. After the Civil War, the Jacobin model began to penetrate American institutions, but only by presenting itself as an *extension of*, rather than a *break with* the original model. The resulting confusion compromises local autonomy (especially in fiscal matters and public financing), but also inhibits outright government intervention.

Of course, most of what American popular culture has to offer, despite its international contributors, is junk. This, however, has less to do with the fact that it is American, than with its being "popular culture." Everywhere, popular culture has to address the lowest possible denominator and thus to appeal only to the lowest level of taste. There is a further structural problem that gives American cultural products a distinct advantage over European and other competitors. Unlike in the US, where there is no real cultural core or codified long-standing national traditions, and, thus, its new cultural products automatically appeal to the kind of general audience that can be found everywhere in the world, the various European countries have to appeal to idiosyncratic national tastes, which cannot be so easily generalized. While Europe and the rest of the world are internationalizing rapidly, it is unlikely that their various cultures will be able to do as well as the American in the near future.

As for Atlanticism, it is a thing of the past. NATO itself is obsolete and

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thrives only by default, pending the development of viable alternatives. As the Kosovo affair has shown, however, European countries do not seem willing or able to develop such an alternative or to take the initiative in international crises. Either because of costs, residual distrust, or cultural differences, it seems much easier to collaborate under US leadership than to work out something different among themselves — even under the EU umbrella. There is constant talk of moving in this direction, but unless there will be a series of crises calling for military intervention, Europeans will simply stall indefinitely, finding American hegemony more palatable than any of the more costly alternatives.

On the whole, from a European viewpoint, this is not an altogether unreasonable decision, considering the increasing cultural and economic integration of the US and Europe. What is most likely to cause friction are bureaucratic matters having to do with turf or fiscal policies. This is why free trade may resolve many of these problems, although the loss of national control over domestic policies will remain the source of a considerable amount of frustration.

10. The Debate With the "New Right"

It has been a couple years now since you started an important debate with the French "New Right," to which you devoted a special double issue. It is actually something more than just a debate. While the war in Serbia has uncovered some lingering disagreements concerning certain questions, Alain de Benoist regularly appears on your pages, you translated and published the entire Manifesto of "The French New Right for the Year 2000," etc. What led you to discover and popularize the French New Right? Why did it attract your interest?

The French New Right is probably one of the most interesting intellectual currents to develop since the 1960s. Unlike most other schools of thought, which have generally undergone a process of internal involution, the French New Right — especially Alain de Benoist — has had the courage to confront and to learn from whatever other sources there are. It was a pleasant surprise for *Telos* to discover that a lot of the original ideas of the New Left, which were later dropped in favor of more fashionable liberal views, had been taken up and developed by people coming from entirely different backgrounds in France — a country which until then, except for Sartre's and Merleau-Ponty's appropriation of some aspects of German phenomenology, we had found to be most unreceptive to foreign ideas. The French New Right, despite its name, has successfully transcended the Left/Right split which, while rejected in theory and no longer defensible in practice, remains in place almost everywhere. Its concern with communitarianism, federalism, direct democracy, identity, the critique of liberalism, the thought of Carl Schmitt, etc. corresponded with our own concerns in the 1990s.

Left dogmatism, which we have criticized from the very founding of *Telos*, made us initially very cautious in confronting what was being described as

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recycled neo-Nazism in a theoretically acceptable garb. We took great care in examining the French New Right's various positions — especially since, at that time, it was the subject of a violent attack by the French Left in Paris. But we found very little we disagree with and much of great interest. When we devoted a special issue of *Telos* to its ideas, we took the time to indicate precisely where we agreed and disagreed. Our initial reservations concerning its "paganism," its typically French anti-Americanism, its attempt to reconstruct European identity independently of a Christianity dismissed as a foreign encrustation, its excessive emphasis on seemingly trivial racial matters, etc. remain. But, on the whole, we find it the sort of group worth debating with and learning from. Anyway, unlike, e.g., many of the paleo-conservatives or most of the doctrinaire Left in the US, it is one of the few groups we have found that can accept disagreements and continue fruitful discussions.

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Reviews:

The Poverty of Cosmopolitanism

Joshua Cohen, ed., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism / Martha Nussbaum with Respondents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 155 pp.+vii.

This volume contains an essay by Martha Nussbaum in defense of world citizenship or "cosmopolitanism," as opposed to patriotism, which she defines as any view treating "national boundaries as morally salient," together with a series of brief supportive (Anthony Appiah and Amartya Sen) and critical (Benjamin Barber, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Hilary Putnam, Immanuel Wallerstein, and Michael Walzer, et al.) comments. The essay originally appeared in *The Boston Review* in 1994 and led to bringing together the "usual suspects" for a bit of popular edification and policy-making. Such posturing by what passes today for public intellectuals is rarely successful and not always easy to stomach, but, in this case, the basic topic is important enough to try to carve out some issues from what is, as printed, a rather muddled debate.

The best way to proceed is to elaborate the problem Nussbaum's "cosmopolitanism" is supposed to answer. Though her critics agree that a defense of "world citizenship" is both naive and dangerous, there is little clarity in the volume as to how this inadequate solution arose from her analysis. Walzer, for instance, sarcastically notes: "No one has ever offered me citizenship, or described the naturalization process, or enlisted me in the world's institutional structures, or given me an account of its decision procedures (I hope they are democratic), or provided me with a list of the benefits and obligation of citizenship, or shown me the world's calendar and the common celebrations and commemorations of its citizens" (p. 125). But sarcasm is no argument against Nussbaum's view, and the ideas found in her essay are shared both in academic and intellectual circles. They are more influential than such an abrupt dismissal suggests.

The idea of cosmopolitanism has the historical roots of an Enlightenment-inspired alternative to parochialism and mores (the natural contrast of "catholic" having already been taken). But this etymological fact does not limit the idea, which could just as well serve, as it does for much of Nussbaum's essay, as a criticism of nation-state patriotism. The state has grown so much in power that it now acts as a default authority. States claim authority, without question, unless their legitimacy is specifically challenged. The old notion of cosmopolitanism

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was adopted to attack the power of local magistrates whose pinched vision hounded recalcitrant, free-thinking individuals. The state, as this retrospective and somewhat "potted" historical argument goes, emerged as a counter-weight to such local tyrannies. But, with the historical eclipse of all other spheres of authority, the state has expanded its domain of power and authority both internally, into the very concept of citizenship, and externally, in terms of how many diverse activities now fall within its purview. Though local magistrates ruled on religious and standard moral matters (death, procreation, etc.), the exercise of power in the modern state has expanded to include health, welfare, safety, and even aesthetic taste, thereby correspondingly expanding its default authority. Also, its authority goes beyond retribution and punishment to extending benefits, advantages, and therapeutics to citizens in return for recognizing its legitimacy. This impersonal and often unchecked exercise of authority requires, even demands a correspondingly stronger response. Is cosmopolitanism that response? Is patriotism what sustains such expansive state power?

The first problem with Nussbaum's analysis is that she vacillates on what is wrong with patriotism. She offers two analyses. One is clear, but implausible; the other is plausible, but unclear. In her first account, she claims that the state is simply morally irrelevant and thereby refutes the broad notion of patriotism as any view of the nation as morally relevant. In the second, the state is treated as part of a series of "concentric circles" of duty, affiliation, and responsibility extending to humanity as a whole (thereby transcending loyalty to the state). Clearly, the former is the stronger claim, but much less plausible than the latter. The position of concentric, expanding circles of participation (discussed below) offers little critical insight, because she leaves it crucially unclear. Both the cosmopolitan as well as the local magistrate could agree with such vaguely stated expanding commitments.

As for the first argument, could the boundaries of a state be morally irrelevant? Nussbaum's argument (setting aside her largely decorative appeals to what the ancient Stoics said) proceeds by comparing citizenship to an accident of birth. "The accident of where one is born is just that, an accident; any human being might have been born in any nation. Recognizing this . . . we should not allow differences in nationality or class or ethnic membership or even gender to erect barriers between us and our fellow human beings" (p. 7). A discussion of moral relevance and contingency would take too much space here, but can be set aside anyway, since this type of argument, even granting her these generous assumptions, does not justify moral irrelevance. If one's birth is accidental, that does not license assuming that it is a morally irrelevant fact. Obligations arising from the fact of birth are clearly moral. Hence, the facts could be as contingent as one pleases (including adoption) and yet remain morally relevant.

What Nussbaum has failed to see, rather surprisingly, is that the issue she has raised about contingency can be avoided by reformulating the moral claim. Though it might be, in her view, contingent that one has obligations to one's parents

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(assuming the accidental fact of one's birth), there is a strict moral obligation of anyone to anyone's parents that avoids her worry entirely. Similarly, then, while in her view where one is born is accidental as well, anyone has morally relevant obligations to anyone's nation or anyone's community. Of course, having concluded that there are some obligations, one has concluded only that the matter is morally relevant. The crucial issue is precisely what are these obligations, how weighty they are, and how they stand with respect to one another (her concentric circles idea enters at this point, but not in a way that addresses these issues). Hence, national boundaries *are* morally relevant. Of course, it is not obvious that they take priority as moral commitments, and that is what she wants to claim about world citizenship and duties to all humanity.

At any rate, Nussbaum does not consistently defend the argument that nation-states are morally irrelevant. In an effort to persuade her readers that cosmopolitanism is compatible with "local identifications" and local moral and political commitments, she outlines an expanding circle of responsibilities and loyalties ending with "humanity as a whole." Obviously, the idea of an expanding series of commitments of varying degrees of strength ending with humanity as a whole is much weaker and, thus, more plausible than the radical claim (which she claims was held by the Stoics) that "we should give our first allegiance to no mere form of government, no temporal power, but to the moral community made up by the humanity of all human beings" (p. 7). However, the concentric circles idea is utterly flaccid. She leaves it so unclear that it offers nothing to dispute, and against which her interlocutors need not respond. In other words, to attack the idea of world citizenship, which does need to be criticized, need not involve holding that there are absolutely *no* moral duties, however delimited and vague, to humanity as a whole. Though these duties will be very hard to specify, such a relation to humanity can be, for all that vagueness, morally relevant. The point is that such relevance does not trump the specifiable and particular duties at the core of a social life.

The argument against Nussbaum's concentric circles concept is that duties to one's closer circles are stronger, more important, more specific, more resilient, and less likely to cause irreparable harm than duties to humanity. It is very hard to state what an obligation to humanity as a whole would require one to do. Even saving the destitute poor might be inconsistent with a duty to all of humanity. In fact, the idea of concentric circles of duties and responsibilities works against cosmopolitanism, because cosmopolitanism appears to demand a hierarchy of duties in which duties to humanity are predominant.

The simple contrast that organizes Nassbaum's essay between the cosmopolitan and the patriot is not just wrong, but misleading, and needlessly so, even if the notion of concentric circles of obligations is embraced. Her utterly empty idea of a citizen of the world is introduced as a way to give some substance to obligations at the furthest edge of these concentric circles. But, even if one for the moment

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accepts such citizenship, albeit metaphorically, there is no reason to think that it could supplant or lessen obligations incurred at closer, more immediate levels; especially if local obligations and duties prevent acting on behalf of humanity as a whole. Whatever it means to say humanity as a whole requires moral consideration, those considerations could not release one from moral obligations to parents, children, or surrounding communities. A person who sought release from these pedestrian, but critical obligations would not be a marvelous world citizen, but a monster. If the humanity-wide obligations are weak, imprecise, and always subordinate, then it is hardly clear why they should be appealed to in her discussion.

For instance, normally it would be morally wrong to harm dependents or those for whom one bears obligations. However, if it were the case that the money spent on one's child's heart surgery could have saved the lives of 100 children in Sierra Leone (these facts need not be plausible), then it looks like one has committed a moral wrong in Nussbaum's interpretation. Yet, how could such surgery for one's child be morally wrong? Denying one's child such surgery would be morally wrong. Such a dilemma has no apparent solution in Nussbaum's assumptions. It is easy for her to proclaim that cosmopolitanism as a moral position is compatible with local obligations, but such compatibility is neither simple nor uncontroversial or explicated by her. One set of these commitments have to be sacrificed. If Nussbaum has an argument for sacrificing the local to humanity as whole, she does not provide it.

Before attempting a further diagnosis of this dilemma, it may be useful to turn to another muddle that haunts this volume. Judith Butler attacks Nussbaum's appeal to universality, and thereby represents the characteristic voice of today's academic post-modernism. (Joshua Cohen announces that editorial judgment was exercised "to ensure the intellectual diversity required for successful debate." (p. viii). As the volume shows, however, diversity is not what is required for successful debate. Clearly delineated positions and believable arguments, neither present here, are what is needed.) Butler, a past winner of the worst academic writing award, is both stylistically and substantively in full wacky form here. Currently, the politicized academic fields of gender and cultural studies are vehemently anti-state, anti-universal, and anti-moral. But they are also deeply inconsistent in these fashionable oppositions. The flavors of the day are skepticism, relativism, and particularity. While widely applauded and paraded, they are rarely and always inconsistently defended.

Unless one agrees with such doctrines, it is important to separate this type of criticism of Nussbaum before figuring out the right way to criticize her view. Butler's arguments against universality are as follows. "The problem emerges, however, when the meaning of 'the universal' proves to be culturally variable and the specific cultural articulations of the universal work against its claim to a transcultural status" (p. 45) First, she claims that one does not know and cannot know (she is not clear about that crucial difference) the content of universal

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moral claims. Second, the claim of a universal moral obligation is inconsistent with cultural diversity. Third, appeal to universality has been used to justify evil policies. These arguments are bad and, worse, inconsistent.

As for the final point, that moral concepts can be used to justify immoral policies, it is obvious. But that no more justifies abandoning the moral concept than the misuse of the concept of relativity by scientific ignoramuses (for justifying one dumb idea or another) justifies abandoning the concept of relativity. More directly, it cannot be argued that universality is illicit by citing its use to justify evil policies, without thereby appealing to a universal concept of morality making the policies in question evil. If Butler hopes to show how appeals to universality are compromised by supporting or encouraging racism, then she must assume racism is wrong. But, it must be wrong in all times and places, not just wrong relative to some particular situation. If it is wrong only relative to such and such a situation, such a claim could not constitute a fault of universality, but more likely a fault of Butler's analysis.

The second argument is irrelevant. Diversity must mean (if such mindless jargon means anything today) that all those parties to a decision ought to be heard. It does not mean every view heard is consistent and/or correct. Only that additional assumption would make the universality of some moral commitments inconsistent with the expression of diverse moral commitments (a diversity unreasonably exaggerated by post-modernists anyway).

The first argument contains the key muddle. Butler's skepticism is about the content of universal claims. Even if one grants her skepticism, universality is not a matter only of content; it is also a matter of logical form. If one says slavery is bad, one makes a universal claim. Even if, like Aristotle, the claim is then qualified to say that some types of slavery are good, it remains a universal claim (and it remains a universal claim even if one disagrees with it — a further point Butler is unable to grasp, perhaps because she confuses universal and true). The logic of universality holds for highly specific claims as long as they do not have proper names in them. In other words, universality is distinct from generality, wherein a claim may well be vague, imprecise, and empty. Thus, even if one is skeptical, the way to critically test moral claims is to ask whether one agrees with the *scope* of a moral claim. Universality is the key to such a test, since exceptions to a moral claim automatically weaken it. If some culture claims that all widows should be killed, then that holds for all widows everywhere. If this claim is challenged, then there will be facts which fit this principle, but where it would be morally wrong to kill. This weakness in the order of moral obligations simply follows from the logic of the claim's universality. One can remain an agnostic or a skeptic or a fallibilist about the *content* of these claims (whether, in other words, the facts of slavery or widowhood are morally objectionable facts) as long as one wishes. What cannot be done, as Butler attempts, is to extend skepticism to the very idea of universality itself. The cost of that move, as her article shows, is the coherence of her criticism and any possible understanding of the views she is either rejecting or recommending.

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But the issue about universality is not the point. Not only is it not what to criticize in Nussbaum, but properly understood, it supports the position that local, particular obligations always trump general, non-specific obligations. Simply put, Nussbaum's cosmopolitanism suffers from generality, not universality, and, once that is grasped, the supremacy of immediate, local, close, specific commitments over generalized, distant, vague commitments is entirely consistent with particular demands being universal because, among other things, they are foundational for social life.

What is Nussbaum's point? It must be that patriotism, especially for one's nation-state, leads to chauvinism (in the bad sense) and perhaps racism in a broad sense of the term. Assuming chauvinism and racism are wrong, then an antidote is needed. The problem concerns Nussbaum's antidote. Why? The answer is twofold, having to do with the metaphysics of social life and with the practical demands of moral commitments. First, a local set of social relations and traditions is not simply a choice in concentric circles of obligation. The social practices and traditions surrounding a person are what constitute that person as such and make possible any obligations and duties at all. One way to understand Aristotle's somewhat mistranslated "man is a political animal" is to treat this as constitutive of being a person, rather than as indicating one among many spheres in which human beings live.

There is, however, a version of this view that has to be rejected. Some think that a constitutive concept of the social world leads to supra-individual entities, such as the nation-state or "world spirit." But states are just collections of people: there are no mysterious supra-individual entities. Where this view to be rejected is partially correct is that individuals are internally and fundamentally social. They require social relations to be persons (though not to be human animals) and to have the capacity to act morally as well as to think critically. These capacities require for their realization traditions and social practices, both of which must impinge on the individual. They cannot be highly general or distant, nor can they survive if eroded by more general and distant commitments. To make it the case that a human individual becomes a social being (a person), the practices must be part of an on-going way of life.

These are metaphysical matters and, thus, somewhat controversial. But, the view sketched above is plausible and defensible, and it shows why the concept of universalizability is needed. These conditions rooted in immediate social relations hold for all persons everywhere. There are no persons possible without such traditions, though there could well be biological beings without social relations. Thus, to have the kind of duties and responsibilities definitive of personhood and definitive of being a citizen, it is not possible to simply belong to humanity as a whole or to live in the world as a whole (though biological beings could).

The practical matters of morality clinch the issue and, though already mentioned, they should be repeated. A moral life is not possible if no decisions can be

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taken which are not immoral. Hence, if the standard of morality is set impossibly high (the standard of saints) or impossibly low (the standard of beasts), all duties and obligations dissolve. Nussbaum's solution sets a standard which cannot be specified and is thus too high. It has the effect of making all decisions morally wrong, since none can serve humanity as a whole: all specific actions are then inconsistent and immoral. Since duties to all human beings are neither reciprocal nor specifiable, they serve only to weaken duties to specific persons for whom the agent is responsible and whose responsibilities can be specified. The effect is two-fold. It provides a rationalization for failing to meet local duties and commitments, and it provides a second rationalization for failing to meet commitments to humanity as a whole, since those commitments will always be vague and there will always reasons against meeting them.

What is the answer? It turns out to be somewhat paradoxical. The way to strengthen culture and humanity as a whole (and to weaken chauvinism in its negative sense) is to strengthen the immediate social relations that constitute a person's identity. Though historical analogies are a mug's game, excesses of moral evil in at least the last century were mostly a result of taking the world as whole, all of the world's classes, the necessities of history, and the future of culture as proper ends. In contrast, more admirable results would follow from acting for this place, this person, this tradition, this interest, this way of life. Of course, anything could become a pretext for harm, as Hilary Putnam rightly notes in his reply to Nussbaum. But, efforts to abolish any and all traditions or local ways of life, since they might becomes pretexts for harm, abolishes the identity of persons as well and the possibility of the general commitments she offers as a substitute.

By the end of this volume, Nussbaum and some of her respondents focus the dispute on various models of education. This change of topic is emphasized in her reply to her critics, where Nussbaum identifies her primary concerns with educational policy and not with changing concrete moral commitments. Not much needs to be added here, since it is unlikely that there is such a thing as the right model of education. But, it is not at all clear that better persons will result from being educated to think of themselves as belonging to the world, rather than belonging to their immediate community. Assuming the proper question is, "given historical experience, what education is liable to produce better persons, more resilient communities, and less harm?," then parochial students imbued with the value of their surrounding social relations are preferable to internationalists imbued with the value of humanity every time.

Ultimately, the issue behind Nussbaum's discussion is not cosmopolitanism or patriotism, neither of which in its proper context is necessarily wrong, but fanaticism. Moral fanaticism is distinct from amoralism (a vastly overrated worry). The moral fanatic is motivated by abstract, general, vague, and yet supposedly superior moral commitments to be defended at all cost. Patriotism, in its negative form, is a particular breed of fanaticism. Nothing for the fanatic can weigh against the full

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realization of some abstract principle or commitment: utterly unqualified commitments constitute the essence of fanaticism. Since such principles are inherently unclear and unlimited, the cost of their realization becomes quickly unreasonable. Lenin was an archetype moral fanatic (Stalin a strategic amoralist), but even so-called "good guys" like Thomas Paine or the abolitionist John Brown share it.

How can fanaticism be weakened? Clearly, it is not a simple matter of pedagogy, since the fanatic takes the commitment to be moral (or, in the case of a fanatic like Lenin, bolstered and disguised by pseudo-scientific defenses). The only proper response here is to criticize the generality and unspecified nature of the fanatic's commitments and how they necessitate violating and abandoning the micro-commitments of everyday life fundamental to the survival of traditions and social practices. Thus, the education of students toward the goals of humanity as whole can only exacerbate moral fanaticism and weaken its natural antidote, namely the enveloping duties and responsibilities of immediate social life. This, in the end, is another argument against state power. If the default authority of states has the effect of eroding the social practices and traditions of local, regional cultures (by usurping their authority in the name of more general national goals), then such usurpation reinforces fanaticism, especially that which sees itself as acting for the world as a whole. Once the problem of fanaticism is seen as central, Nussbaum's argument for cosmopolitanism evaporates and, worse, defends the wrong side.

As an alternative to the Stoics Nussbaum quotes approvingly, it may be better to end with F. H. Bradley's criticisms of Kantianism. Bradley's conclusions are relevant to the above flirtation with cosmopolitanism. "Everybody knows that the only way to do your duty is to do your duties; that general doing good may mean doing no good in particular, and so none at all, but rather perhaps the contrary of good. Everybody knows that the setting out, whether in religion, morals, or politics, with the intent to realize an abstraction is a futile endeavor; and that what it comes to is that either you do nothing at all, or that the particular content which is necessary for action is added to the abstraction by the chance of circumstances or caprice." Bradley concludes: "We have thus seen the community to be the real moral idea, to be stronger than the theories and practices of its members against it, and to give us self-realization . . . it bids us to say farewell to positions of superhuman morality, to ideal societies, and to practical 'ideals' generally. ... and leaving 'ideals' out of sight, it is quite clear that if anybody wants to realize himself a perfect man without trying to be a perfect member of his country *and all his small communities*, he makes what all sane persons would admit to be a great mistake."[1]

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1. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1951), pp. 91 and 135 respectively, emphasis added.

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Social Theory and its Limitations

Alan Sica, ed., *What Is Social Theory? The Philosophical Debates* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 286 pp. +x.

This book deals with the dilemmas of "grand theory," which presents a synoptic view of human nature and society, and with testable hypotheses, which consist of more humble propositions subject to empirical testing. Although Alan Sica finds "no fewer than seven or eight distinct theoretical vantage points" (p. 12) represented in this volume," for the most part they all share vulnerabilities which become evident when confronted with a common set of philosophical strategies. The dilemmas of grand theory are clear in Robert J. Antonio's treatment of what he calls "epistemological perspectivism" (p. 31), whose advocates adhere to "conditional ideas of 'objectivity'," and "argue that 'facts' are culturally constituted." In a footnote, Antonio adds: "Because of the lack of a readily identifiable alternative, I employ 'epistemology' with reservations. In this context, the term is contradictory, because it has been entwined with the West's representational theory of knowledge (i.e., 'philosophy of the subject' or 'spectator theory') stressing the subject-object dichotomy, primacy of theory, external truth, and knowledge producers as disembodied, neutral eyes." This is a raw nerve of postmodernist theory, which cannot be dismissed so easily. Is postmodernism "post-theoretical" or is it a continuation of the Western theoretical tradition? This question harks back to dilemmas surrounding skepticism from ancient times. The "conditional ideas of objectivity" that animate even moderate postmodernists evoke the specter of a man-made world. Moderate perspectivism as a skeptical thesis raises serious issues of reflexivity and consistency. The moderate perspectivist views *perspectivally* all claims to knowledge except his own.

In the form popularized by Jean-François Lyotard,[1] postmodernism rebels against the duplicating effects of vocabularies of justification. In its suspicion of metanarrativity, it seeks to redraw the theoretical landscape so that a statement's legitimacy is established independently of the theoretical umbrella under which it might be subsumed. If postmodernism is persuasive in its delegitimation of the justificatory enterprise, the moderate perspectivists central point about skepticism can be made without having to be concerned about the impact the denial of knowledge has on knowledge about the lack of knowledge (the consistency issue). From a postmodernist perspective, the skeptic's point can be dissociated from its assumptions and

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, tr. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Masumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984).

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implications, so that denial can be severed from the ability to fix the object of denial.

Recourse to multivalued logics, coupled with a generalized agnosticism, makes it possible to achieve equivalence with the postmodernist argument about severability without having to accept the grandiose metatheoretical claims of postmodernism concerning the dispensability of justification.[2] The most telling rejoinder to these claims is that the very formulation of (rational) arguments against modernism attests to the endurance of issues of consistency, of self-referentialism. From a modernist perspective that invokes a generalized agnosticism and multivalued logics, it is possible to make the same case that postmodernists make (and proclaim as their great breakthrough) about the severability of assertions from their presuppositions and implications.[3] Thus, the choice of the postmodernist label seems purely honorific, a matter of linguistic and stylistic preference.

Antonio identifies radical epistemological perspectivism with "a pure textualism that withholds epistemological privilege from all narratives, suspending completely all judgments based on representational grounds or on the relative

2. Multivalued logics came to the fore in the late 19th and 20th centuries as a means for encoding the suspension of the law of the excluded middle, so that logical nomenclature would exist for configuring what look like contradictory statements in ways that given the new notational rubrics sidestep the issue of contradiction. Multivalued logics dissolve the issue of contradiction by normalizing it — by designing new sets of logical moves and protocols that enshrine these possibilities, instead of rejecting them. A world that is perceived and analyzed under the prism of multivalued logics thus involves a jettisoning not only of Aristotle's law of the excluded middle, but of his law of noncontradiction. It is a world that seems in many ways exotically different from the present one. What would make it less strange would be the cultivation of a generalized agnosticism stipulating that the returns are not yet in concerning what the world is like, so that, in contrast to traditional Aristotelian logic, the possibility remains that multivalued logics might capture more accurately the structure of the world. In this narrative, postmodernism is continuous with the Western past — a kind of philosophical and cultural analogue to developments in modern theoretical physics, which have also evoked multivalued logical construals of their findings. As a further alternative, the argument can be made without referring to multivalued logics. Since the proponents of moderate epistemological perspectivism are not able to absorb the application of this critical canon in relation to their own position, they are willy-nilly thrust into a generalized agnostic stance. Since the formulation of even moderate epistemological perspectivism is predicated on a non-perspectival position (advocates of this position claim it is non-perspectivally true), their mobilization of this position against positions other than their own cancels itself out and yields a generalized agnosticism.

3. Thomas Nagel defends varieties of realism across a whole spectrum of subfields in philosophy: "In general, I'll use the term 'subjectivism' rather than 'skepticism,' to avoid confusion with the kind of epistemological skepticism that actually relies on the objectivity of reason, rather than challenging it." In the light of this formulation, it is not surprising that Nagel later embraces a version of a generalized agnosticism: "The aim of universal validity is compatible with the willingness always to consider alternatives and counterarguments — *but they must be considered as candidates for objectively valid alternatives and arguments.* It is possible to accept a form of rationalism without committing oneself to a closed set of self-evident foundational truths." Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 4n and 69.

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truth or falsity of depictions of 'realities' beyond the text. Rather, they focus on 'language games' or 'discursive practices'" (p. 33). Many feminists are concerned about the conservative political implications of radical epistemological perspectivism, as is evident in Jennifer L. Croissant's statement: "Scholars pronounce the death of the subject and of authoritative knowledge just at the point where women, minorities, the oppressed and the previously unspoken and unauthored begin to theorize and speak authoritatively and knowledgeably, from experience and in various communities, about their silence and oppression" (p. 150). Again, the political dilemmas surrounding textualism result from not taking seriously issues of reflexivity surrounding formulations of skepticism. Doing so mitigates against an extreme skepticism, and thereby liberates and sanctions those political practices that proponents of political radicalism would argue are conducive to the achievement of greater justice and equality. Since textualism as a variety of extreme skepticism is not able to absorb the application of its own critical tenets in relation to itself, it devolves into a species of a generalized agnosticism which creates space for radical political action.

The metaphysical and political dilemmas attendant to textualism are most acutely present in the writings of Foucault. In order to make his case for the pervasiveness of power, Foucault relies on the textualist thesis that meaning is underdetermined by text and that, in order to account for which interpretations of particular texts manage to gain historical prominence, one must have recourse to a power hypothesis. For Foucault, the order of sexuality and schemes of punishment are texts; he discerns the role of power and the suppression of the other in even these most minimal and characteristic orderings of personality and social relations.[4] To the extent that Foucault adheres to the thesis of textuality, he is debarred from crossing the boundary between the texts of sexuality and punishment (that allow for the continuing play of signifiers) and an external reading (that shifts the burden of interpretation and explanation to worldly configurations of power, which shape and distort constructions). The two halves of the texualist thesis are in sharp tension with each other. If texts are permanently unfinished (they can always go on being interpreted, if there is nothing in the text that establishes closure), then a power hypothesis has nothing to latch on to. If a fixed and determinate text can never be secured, then there is nothing for a power hypothesis to be about. If the resources of internal interpretive play can never be (theoretically) exhausted, then it would appear that an external approach that connects interpretation with certain configurations of power in the world can be deferred endlessly. The intellectual space for it will be denied as long as internalist readings that make only minimal and indirect reference to the world can go on being played out forever.

Foucault's procedure of analysis presupposes some version of positivism —

4. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, tr. by Alan Sheridan(New York: Vintage, 1975); *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, tr. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976).

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that particular readings of texts are allowed to remain as they are, and are not susceptible to more imaginative readings — in order to create theoretical space for his thesis concerning the ubiquity of power. The controversy between Foucault and Derrida concerning how to interpret the *cogito* passage of Descartes — with Foucault arguing for complicity between Descartes and medical-juridical structures in excluding those who have been called mad from reflective consideration concerning how human beings think, and Derrida pursuing a purely internalist reading, whereby Descartes wants to call our most characteristic rationalistic processes into question on the basis of the universal experience of the dream state — can be translated and extended into Foucault's philosophy as a whole. It seems that one needs to choose between Foucault and Derrida; one cannot be a disciple of both.[5] It is Foucault's grafting of Marx onto Nietzsche in his search for social analogues and manifestations of expressions and distortions of power that gives rise to the special tension evident in Foucault's writings.

Thomas Kuhn's philosophy of science, which has had such widespread influence over the past two generations, can also be understood as incorporating a textualist thesis.[6] According to Kuhn, the will to truth manifested in the master paradigms of extraordinary science generally is undermined in the course of the traditional cyclical patterns of development of normal science, which is fashioned to institutionalize and to refine the inspiring paradigms. Puzzles leading to anomalies impede the progressive extension and application of the original paradigms, and eventually generate a crisis atmosphere that serves as the occasion for a new institutionalization of the will to truth. In Kuhn's depiction of how the enterprise of science works, efforts at theoretical totalization have their arbitrary character exposed by periodic "returns of the repressed," which unmask the aspirations to truth of the great theoretical innovators as colossal assertions of power. This explication of the structure and development of science can be read as answering the questions as to why no theories ever hold up completely and why none of them can be considered to be objectively representing the truth. To a certain extent, theories are textual artifacts and, as such, are always at one remove from the world. The project of interpreting them only fortuitously coincides with the project of finding out the truth about the world.

Skepticism blocks most translations of itself even as it effectively cuts off alternatives, which is well to remember when considering the different versions of macro social theory presented in *What is Social Theory?*. Turning to phenomenology as a method for doing social theory does not alleviate any of the paradoxes. According to Mary F. Rogers, phenomenology emphasizes "an experiential turn that focuses theoretical attention on the wherewithal and presuppositions of

5. Robert D'Amico, "Text and Context: Derrida and Foucault on Descartes," in *The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with French Thoughts* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 164-182.

6. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

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human experiencing. In the social sciences that shift shows up in renewed engagement with those qualitative methods where narrators' experiences command center stage" (p. 76). In the words of Maurice Natanson: "Phenomenology turns with great patience to the detailed and the minute and seeks to illuminate the specificity and the uniqueness of what gives us a world. The result is a liberation of detail, an epiphany of the familiar" (quoted by Rogers, p. 80). A feminist philosopher of science such as Evelyn Fox Keller seeks to study the relation between scientific investigators and their subject matter in phenomenological terms — to theorize what scientists are doing as they go about their daily work and to have that serve as the appropriate focus for philosophical analysis. What is problematic in this approach is that, while experience is intimate, personal and unmistakable, the vocabulary for describing it is not. The language used to describe even the most directly affecting experience is underdetermined by that experience. There are multiple conceptual frameworks to capture even the most poignant and urgent experiences. It is misguided to think that immediacy yields certainty. Also, by theorizing immediacy a phenomenologist such as Natanson derogated already from the immediacy which his theory seeks.

Steven Fuller's social epistemology is also bedevilled by certain issues of skepticism. He describes social epistemology as "a normative sociology of knowledge" (p. 95), which is an attempt to recapture "the conditions to which those texts [that one is seeking to understand] might be construed as a reasonable response" (p. 96). Adapting R.G. Collingwood's approach,[7] Fuller seeks to recover those questions "that form the 'absolute presuppositions' of his [a theorist's] inquiry" (*ibid.*). He illustrates his approach by showing the diverse ways in which Nietzsche, Leo Strauss, and Alvin Gouldner reconstruct Plato. These theorists are less concerned with the content of Plato's thought than with its context — the questions that it was implicitly trying to answer. Their point of intersection with Plato was in their diverse appreciation of the questions he was implicitly trying to answer, rather than with the context of his answers *per se*.

This approach evokes two methodological concerns. The first is that it invites a social epistemological approach to itself, which involves a displacement of its content by its context, and the resulting evisceration of its methodological content leaves little to go by in applying its "method." The second has to do with the unbounded character of the questions to which a philosopher's text can be construed as a response. As Gadamer has emphasized in his philosophy of hermeneutics,[8] in many respects it makes sense to view texts as dialogical exercises — partnered acts — that require the active interrogation of subsequent generations of readers in order to even transiently complete their trajectories. The underdetermination of meaning by text (how possibilities of contextualization

7. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946).

8. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, ed. and tr. by G. Barden and J. Cumming (New York: Seabury, 1975).

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and recontextualization remain continually open) delegitimates the privileging Plato's or any other theorist's questions in relation to one's own.

In "Making Normative Soup with Non-normative Bones," Steven Turner uses Robert Brandom's book, *Making It Explicit*,[9] in trying to account for the phenomenon of normativity. "Brandom asks what justifies explicit normative assertions, such as statements about the correctness or incorrectness of actions and claims, and says that the best explanation is this: ultimately justification rests on implicit norms or 'practices,' meaning, for him, regularities of action which are normative" (p. 119). There are two largely Wittgensteinian arguments that Brandom offers in favor of this concept. The first attempts to shut off an infinite regress. Since rules are not self-applying, one cannot point to a rule as a source of obligation in bringing the quest to an end. In applying a rule, one still needs to invoke implicit rules in deciding upon questions of application, and these implicit rules in turn presuppose prior rules. The search for justification, therefore, can only stop "at the point of implicit norms or practices" (p. 120). In the end, the social efficacy of practices have to be translated in a normatively non-tautological way as the statement: "You do it because you do it."

The second argument, which is inspired by Kripke's work on Wittgenstein,[10] centers around what Brandom calls the "gerrymandering problem." Utilizing Kripke's and Wittgenstein's example: "Although we 'naturally' continue the series 2, 4, 6, 8 with the rest of the even numbers, there is, and can be, no mathematical reason for doing so" (*ibid.*). Since there is "such a large array of possible rules or possible sequences" that "are theoretically consistent with the claim that they continue the series 2, 4, 6, 8," the sealing off of these theoretical possibilities so as to ensure the gerrymandered result that 10 becomes the next number in the series has to be seen as resulting from the implicit normativity of the social practice governing the construction of the series.

Following Brandom, Turner seems to have been captivated by the optical illusion, spun by Wittgenstein and some of his most vocal followers, to the effect that skepticism can be sidestepped and certainty achieved by acknowledging the centrality of "language games" for grappling with philosophical issues. The deceptive tolerance that pervades the surface of Wittgenstein's argument in the *Philosophical Investigations* leads one to think that epistemologically "anything goes." But this is true only because metaphysically — ontologically — nothing matters. Whether the topic is the laws of logic or the foundations of mathematics, religion or aesthetics, the moves made in these disparate regions of discourse ultimately are grounded in "the linguistic practices which embody them" — and nothing else.[11]

9. Robert B. Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

10. Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

11. David Pears, *Ludwig Wittgenstein* (New York: Viking, 1970), p. 179.

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The most fruitful way to conceptualize the pattern of unity linking the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with the intervening works of the 1930s and the *Philosophical Investigations* is in terms of a broadening and deepening skepticism. The doctrine of logical atomism that is integral to Wittgenstein's argument in the *Tractatus* leads to the exclusion of certain regions of experience (the ethical, the aesthetic, the religious, and the philosophical) as falling outside the scope of rational resolution within language. These areas of experience have been completely "privatized," i.e., confined to inner states of feeling and having no objective translation in the shared resources of language. One might say that the *Philosophical Investigations* completes the project begun in the *Tractatus*. A good deal of ordinary language in the *Tractatus* can still be salvaged as a vehicle of knowledge and of truth. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, ordinary discourse emerges as problematic in character. There are no external points of reference by which to verify even our typical, everyday assertions, so that, with regard to the brute facts in any given situation, the agent's institutional description enjoys no logical priority over that of any other observer.

From nearly all the angles explored in *What Is Social Theory?*, macro theory emerges as exceedingly vulnerable. Most often, this theory is either a disguised or displaced form of skepticism, as in Wittgenstein or Foucault, or, at best, its critical canon cannot be reflexively sustained. When macro theory is a disguised or displaced form of skepticism, it is only sustainable under the aegis of multivalued logics coupled with a generalized agnosticism or as a generalized agnosticism taken by itself. When macro theory's critical canon cannot be reflexively sustained, it ends up willy-nilly espousing a generalized agnostic position, since its critical canon cancels itself out.

The upshot of this critique of many of the forays into macro social theory found in *What Is Social Theory?* is that they are indefensible in relation to the background skeptical metatheoretical horizons they posit for themselves. If those essays were to be regarded as so many case-studies of the effort to engage in macro social theorizing, as soon as theorizing strays from a preoccupation with and awareness of its own limits it devolves into ideology, i.e., an incomplete and not fully justifiable defense of a philosophical position that takes itself as having clinched its case. Ideology purveying itself as theory is, of course, vulnerable to the criticisms in the writings of Marx, Mannheim and others.

What Is Social Theory? illustrates that, from a metatheoretical perspective, micro theory fares no better than macro theory. In his essay on "Theoretical Models: Sociology's Missing Links," John Skvoretz claims that "Theoretical models have a number of advantages as links between theory and data because they more clearly state and more accurately represent a theory's claims" (p. 248), whereas methodological models "summarize data by general-effect parameters which have no specific referent to theoretical constructs. On the other hand, estimates of parameters in theoretical models have direct interpretation in terms of

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key theoretical constructs" (*ibid.*). Theoretical models are favored over methodological models for sociological research because of their avowedly more circular character: they exhibit a reciprocal and mutually supportive relation with the data they purport to explain and to interpret. Because of their more content-rich nature in contrast to methodological models, they constitute more fruitful frameworks for sociological generalization.

On a deeper level than Skvoretz's analysis explicitly elaborates, the explanatory pretensions of sociological theory seem impaled upon the horns of a dilemma. Skvoretz condemns methodological models for the ways in which they bridge the theory-data gulf because in them "theory becomes a matter of informal guesswork about which variables affect which others and in what directions" (p. 251). In other words, the vacuousness of methodological models signifies that, when connections are drawn between explanatory variables and empirical outcomes, they are supplied by the researchers, rather than being disinterestedly generated by their investigative apparatus. Whatever content emerges from the application of methodological models to sociological phenomena can therefore be condemned as circular. The situation does not improve by substituting theoretical for methodological models in sociological research. In methodological models the emptiness is expressive of circularity. In theoretical models it is the content of the orienting theory guiding research that is expressive of circularity.

If circularity seems to be unavoidable on the level of micro theory, then it is worth noting that a generalized agnosticism takes the sting out of circularity by showing how it is impossible to do any better. From a generalized agnostic perspective, the returns are never fully with regard to any phenomenon to be explicated. In order to proceed to a level of even provisional closure and to be able to theorize and to explain a particular phenomenon, one must engender the illusion that the returns are in — that the speculative questions hovering over the conceptual penumbra of the categories constituting the domains of theory and fact and demarcating between them have already been resolved. Their lack of resolution — and perhaps their irresolvability — yield the yardstick in terms of which we can measure the extent to which it has already been assumed what the scientific projects were designed to prove.

Theorizing is largely negative. It consists in exposing limitations, rather than in clinching positive points. If what is taken to be theory in *What Is Social Theory?* is not real theory, then one ends up with a ratification or reification or relegitimation of the *status quo*. Theory, as Michael Oakeshott repeatedly reminds his readers, conjures up the possibilities out of which facts are generated.[12] It focuses on the ways in which classifications of fact remain underdetermined — how there is generally more than one way to make sense of groupings of fact. Where there is no viable theory, there is only fact, i.e., a reflection of the *status*

12. Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 1-31ff.

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quo. From this perspective, sociology emerges as a new form of domination — a power-grab by a new constellation of power-knowledge.

The legitimation of sociology as a scientific field of inquiry and as defining a secularist world-view seems to be the motive force behind many of the essays in this volume. Sociology looms as a fragmented mythology — one more superstition of the age. At least traditional theologies harbor the intellectual and emotional solace of offering a much broader picture — an integrated view of life. Sociological theory as represented in this volume, while on no more secure an ontological footing than traditional religions, compounds its inability to deliver on its various research programs by its skewed and self-flattering self-image that axiomatically assumes its superiority to traditional religion.

Instrumentalist concepts of self-knowledge and scientific knowledge can be viewed as the legatees of the skeptical critiques of knowledge discussed here. The negative character of theorizing captured by Steven Rytina in such formulations as "Even the most comprehensive deductive reconstruction must somewhere come to ultimate premises and these, for better and for worse, stand on nothing" and "The largest questions are only askable, not answerable" (pp. 197 and 217) achieves perhaps its most effective translation in a philosophy of instrumentalism.[13] If theory is largely negative, then its most useful role is as a prodder to keep one sufficiently loose and flexible in order to maximize practical and theoretical opportunities.

For example, the choice in theories of knowledge between literalism and realism, on the one hand, and constructivism, on the other, can be construed as largely an instrumentalist one. Since underdetermination suffuses the relation between theories and words and facts, even terms like realism exceed the warrant of their own reference pool. The term (category) "realism" is itself a constructivist label. The nominalism associated with negative theology — as well as negative theology itself — are morally salutary, because by enhancing the awareness of human freedom they correspondingly increase the sense of responsibility and accountability.[14] However, there are occasions when freedom is experienced as a blockage. Being free to structure and to orient life in meaningful directions creates the need for assurances. The instrumentalized ontological space that realism occupies makes it possible to invoke "realist" factors to provide a sense of orientation and direction. From a generalized agnostic perspective, realism is on no more nor less

13. Rytina's preferred metatheoretical category is "granularity," which he links with infinity: "A metaphor for the granularity one finds beneath a trapdoor to a language game is that it is infinite, with grain so fine as to be like talc, or even mush. There are plenty of options in sight, but far too many to list, or to otherwise order. There are choices, but no way to make any sense of how one selects among them. There are sometimes apparent leading choices, but any degree of self-reflection, or of empiricism on how others reflect and choose, will soon enough dissolve such peaks into ever finer-grained texture without terminus or bright paths. There is no way to single out particular sequences or elements, or symbols, and assign some compulsive attribute, such as validity" (pp. 208-209).

14. See Aryeh Botwinick, *Skepticism, Belief, and the Modern: Maimonides to Nietzsche* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

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a secure footing than skepticism. Therefore, an instrumentalized usage of both categories makes sense. If realism gives a more confident sense in navigating life, then there is no philosophical barrier to its being temporarily adopted. An instrumentalist approach to the conduct of life engenders an awareness of and commitment to its process character: how the various substantive packages that go to constitute the intellectual understandings and moral beliefs and values are ontologically situated as instrumentalist probes and levers, facilitating mobility.

Philosophy of science needs to figure this relation between the self and the world. Facts are low-level theories, and theories are underdetermined by facts. Their relation to each other and to elements outside themselves is largely instrumental. There are theoretically alternative ways for conceiving both the nature and content of theories and the facts that they help to situate and to identify. Just as in the individual's relation to the notions he considers realist and those he regards as constructed, so too in the fabric of science conceived as a whole, the overriding factor governing stability and change is the nurturance of movement — of process — itself. In a direct challenge to and inversion of common sense approaches to science, its substantive content has to be seen as subordinate to the most economical and masterful maintenance of process, i.e., of unencumbered, agile movement. The dilemmas that beset the philosophy of science — whether there is theoretical progress and how it might best be registered; how to metatheoretically configure the relation between theories and facts so that the explanations that result from their juxtaposition are non-circular; how to address issues of self-referentialism in philosophical, scientific, and everyday formulations so that dilemmas surrounding discourse do not end up mystifying the possibilities of scientific formulation — can perhaps be addressed most fruitfully from this perspective.

The world and the self share a common precariousness when viewed from a generalized agnostic perspective. It is never certain that conceptualizations and the apparent advancements and refinements that occur within and between them could not have been other than what they are, and that they could not have yielded alternate mappings and identifications of reality. There is no certainty that the world of theory is fact, since nagging and inextirpable doubts exist that different conceptual nets would have captured different aspects of "reality," which would have suggested alternative concepts of manageability and advance, and since there is no access to a sufficiently conceptually unadorned reality to test which set of conceptualizations more accurately reflect the nature of reality. The assessment of theories is done in relation to a theoretically tainted reality that allows for retail judgments (validations) in the face of a range of wholesale pre-commitments. If those pre-commitments are suspended, then there is no "reality" available to interrogate for purposes of experimentation. The linkage between the world and theory is too mutually-supportive to sustain the claim of neutral knowledge of the world as it is.

Aryeh Botwinick

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21st Century Politics

Marcello Veneziani, *Comunitari o Liberal: La Prossima Alternativa* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1999), 99 pp.

After the French Revolution, when "Left" and "Right" came to designate the two main political orientations in Europe, "modernity" became the dominant metaphysical horizon within which almost all political questions have been formulated. As Panajotis Kondylis has shown in *Konservatismus* and other works, earlier "pre-modern" conservative visions lingered on, buried mostly in fading institutions, but their time was up. In the 20th century, the major political ideologies — Bolshevism, fascism, Nazism, liberalism, etc. — have all been alternative *modernist* proposals for social reconstruction, concerned primarily with how to modernize society in what these ideologies postulate as the most efficient, just and rational way. Most of them have done so at astronomical human costs and by deploying unprecedented brutality. What has contributed to occluding the common genealogy of these various ideologies has been the extreme acrimony and violence that has characterized relations among the regimes subscribing to them. Yet, shocking as it may be, the mountains of corpses they left behind does not widen the narrow gap separating their respective modernist philosophies of history.

As a result of their efforts to eliminate each other through hot and cold wars, modernist ideologies have precipitated ever more homogenization. The WWII defeat of fascism and Nazism led to the criminalization not only of both these ideologies, but of the "Right" in general, while the end of the Cold War has meant the definitive delegitimation of communism, as well as practically all socialist and Welfare-State projects. Today, traditional Left parties continue to win elections and to govern practically everywhere, especially in Europe, but only after having repudiated their original organizing principles and, occasionally having discarded their former names to distance themselves from whatever was still "distinctive" in their positions. The one-dimensionality described over a generation ago by Herbert Marcuse, and even earlier by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, has turned out to be even more bland and conformist than feared. Contrary to both "end of ideology" ideologues, who welcomed such an outcome as the achievement of utopia, and their critics, who depicted it as a "new and improved" form of soft totalitarianism, "the new world order" is far from resembling either of the projected visions. The gradual liquidation of most "pre-modern" residues which, indicted as the cause of any remaining social problems, had legitimated modernist theodicy, has paved the way for a whole series of new conflicts incomprehensible within the predominant conceptual framework. Having successfully saturated practically every aspect of everyday life, today the modernist world-view has become not only the major obstacle to an adequate

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self-understanding, but a conceptual trap which automatically turns all "leftists," "rightists" or "centrists" into *de facto* conservatives in the most banal sense of the term, i.e., into apologists for the *status quo*. Unable to transcend the conventional wisdom, they end up mourning or, even worse, attempting at all costs to hold on to what they nonetheless acknowledge is hopelessly obsolete.

Not surprisingly, many modernist overviews of the contemporary socio-political predicament have "end," rather than "new," as part of their title. From Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History*, to Russell Jacoby's *The End of Utopia* and Carl Boggs' *The End of Politics* (not to mention more elegant European euphemisms, which prefer "decline," as in Pietro Barcelona's *Il Declino dello Stato*, or "dusk," as in Mario Tronti's *La Politica al Tramonto*), the common thread of all these analyses is that something has become exhausted. Unable to spell out exactly what it is, however, they all end up calling for a rekindling of the old "radical" flame or, in more optimistic accounts, redescribing what has ended as more of the same old pre-modern remnants. Unlike the increasingly popular movie genre featuring multiple endings, such as "Pulp Fiction" and "Run, Lola, Run," where the various possible outcomes are actually qualitatively different, these terminal political analyses all provide slightly different versions of exactly the same conclusion. They are all descriptions, whether positive or negative, of the end of an era and of the kind of world-view which, acknowledged or not, was shared by the last few generations in the West and now elsewhere as well. Even in the case of Panglossian apotheoses of the consequences of the end of the Cold War, such as Fukuyama's, what is at stake is the same all-too-real general development: the exhaustion of modernity at the very acme of its success.

This state of affairs helps explain why it is so difficult to rethink political divisions in terms of acceptance or rejection of modernity, and why there is so much reluctance to regard modernity as simply another historically specific approach to reality, rather than as the necessary outcome of social development. The problem is that the very posing the question in terms of "modernity" leads to an evaporation of discourse to a level of abstraction so general and inaccessible that the whole undertaking eventually ends up relegitimating the modernity under scrutiny by automatically translating familiar conceptual paradigms into common sense. Thus, today, the mere questioning of modernity is perceived to be either a reactionary vindication of pre-modernity or an expression of postmodern nihilism. Trapped in a unilinear temporal sequence, the modernist imagination confuses ideology with chronology, and interprets all transgressions of its dogmatically accepted norms as maladjustments or pathologies. But, there has never been anything "modern" (in the sense of "better" or "superior") about modernist ideologies, other than that they happen to have been most fashionable for the last couple of centuries. In fact, to the extent that they presuppose and are therefore parasitic precisely on that "premodern" cultural patrimony they systematically erase, their very success corresponds to their demise. In this sense, anti-modernist

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reactions are the natural outcome of intensifying modernist "rationalization," i.e, the eradication of whatever does not fit within the predominant scheme.

Relegated to an intuitive level that is hardly ever articulated sufficiently to generate theoretical frameworks able to translate into concrete political positions (since most of todays' intellectuals are themselves a modernist by-product), anti-modernist sensibilities, which cannot be automatically sequenced as either pre-modern or post-modern reactions, remain undifferentiated and undeveloped, exploding only occasionally, to be readily reinserted within the predominant political discourse. This does not alter the fact that all recent efforts to prolong the life of the modernist narrative are doomed. Despite the fact that Western economies seem to be on an indefinite expansion as a result of the unprecedented growth in productivity precipitated by new technologies — developments that usually discourage radical tinkering with the *status quo* — no one denies that something fundamental has changed. The old pork-barrel politics, which a few years ago were still concerned primarily with economic issues (recall the cryptic battle-cry paving the way for Clinton's victory in the 1992 election: "It's the economy, stupid!" — even though Clinton's policies, and other derivative European variations, only extended existing strategies) have given way to new cultural politics, where the conflicting sides can no longer be identified as either "Left" or "Right."

To be sure, this state of affairs has not gone unnoticed. But the kind of debate that, e.g., followed the publication of Norberto Bobbio's extremely successful little book, *Left and Right: The Significance of a Political Distinction* — an elegant, but desperate and ultimately failed effort to resurrect a defunct political dichotomy — does not seem to have settled anything. In fact, in retrospect, the very attempt to uphold the dichotomy appears more and more to be an ideological move to relegitimate a bankrupt Left ideology, otherwise indistinguishable from its equally bankrupt Right counterpart, by caricaturing its opposition as tendentially authoritarian and crypto-fascist, and thus squatting on the moral high ground of anti-fascism, equality, and social justice. The problem with this maneuver, as Marcello Veneziani argues in his book on communitarians and liberals, is that such a dichotomy presupposes the existence of two sides, and today those who are opposed to the Left refuse to be associated with the Right (p. 76). This is why he suggests that the main political division in the 21st century is likely to be between liberals and communitarians — despite the fact that the latter have not yet managed to coalesce anti-modernist sentiments into any kind of systematic political philosophy, and that liberals have succeeded in co-opting their opponents within a cloudy, one-size-fits-all centrist framework.

Politics, however, requires conflict and opposition. Thus, centrist syntheses are doomed to fail, and the differences between communitarians and liberals are bound to sharpen rather than fade, even if there is a growing number of new pseudo-communitarians, such as Amitai Etzioni, who have (with some success and a lot of government funding) sought to subsume communitarian impulses within a broadened Welfare-State liberal framework. Veneziani probably provides

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as accurate an account of existing political differences between the two poles as is possible at this time. Yet, his descriptive-didactic approach prevents him from inquiring into the dynamics governing the respective development of the two and their relation to the broader phenomenon of the disintegration of modernity.

If, in fact, communitarianism and liberalism are not merely two competing political alternatives but, in terms of their relation to modernity, conceptual systematizations of different responses to different problems arising at different times in the history of the West, then, despite Veneziani's admitted preference for communitarianism, posing both at the same abstract level already presupposes a liberal bias. It is part and parcel of liberalism to regard political ideologies as merely abstract choices by equally abstract individuals objectifying their interests and values within a neutral political arena defined exclusively by strict and clearly spelled out procedural rules. As for communitarians, values and interests are always social in character, and it is their very codification and objectification that defines political entities. Even politics itself is not concerned with interest aggregation within a society of private citizens, but with friend/enemy relations among political entities so defined. Consequently, while liberalism sees communitarianism as but another arbitrary world-view predicated on nostalgia and other reactionary criteria, such as ethnicity, religion, language, and race, communitarianism sees liberalism as an abstract proceduralism originally meant to deal with the religious civil wars and subsequently deteriorating into a normative system that gradually displaces the cultural particularities of the various warring factions.

What is at stake here is much more than simply a political contest between two alternative modes of social organization. It is a matter of two radically different ways of understanding the trajectory of Western civilization: one, modernist; the other, anti-modernist. The teleology of the first, in its communist, liberal-democratic or even Nazi variations, culminates in a society of autonomous, equal, and thereby homogeneous individuals (in the Nazi case: a racially homogeneous society; in the liberal-democratic case: a juridically homogeneous society of hyper-heterogeneous individuals whose myriad of differences are all dissolved in an abstract *Verfassungspatriotismus*). In this sense, liberal society seeks to abolish politics as the conflictual tension between different groups whose identity is predicated on the adherence to particular cultural tenets codified in their particular moral and juridical framework, in favor of a technocratic administration predicated on neutral procedures of classless individuals engaged exclusively in the pursuit of self-interest. The teleology of the second projects an aggregation of communities, with their particular cultural identity, competing with each other in a conflictual context where any harmonious resolution is not guaranteed by a state or even a world government, but by contractual arrangements between the various sovereign groups (despite the fact that, especially during the last century, the human price paid for failing to negotiate such arrangements has been unimaginable).

The irony here is that the radicalization of the differences between liberalism

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and communitarianism tends to erase their incompatibility. In fact, at the dawn of liberalism, they were not necessarily incompatible. They became so only after liberal proceduralism underwent a modernist transformation and hardened into a normative system competing with the particular cultural frameworks of the political entities whose relations it was meant to regulate. Originally, the American Constitution was drafted precisely in order to reconcile liberal proceduralism at the federal level and cultural particularity at the state level. More generally, in the original Althusian formulation and before the mid-19th century, when the concept was gradually corrupted to end up corresponding to nationalism — to the point that, today, in the US and within the EU, the two are practically interchangeable — federalism represented precisely such a reconciliation.

This helps to explain why communitarianism, unlike liberalism, which is now several centuries old, began to coalesce as a political doctrine only after liberalism completed its normativist involution with the full bloom of the *Sozialstaat* and the Welfare State in the 1970s, just before Reagan and Thatcher sought unsuccessfully to return it to its original formulation. While Veneziani's elegant presentation, in attempting to be fair, devotes roughly equal time and space to both, it leaves the mistaken impression that the two are at an equal level of theoretical elaboration. But, nothing could be further from the truth. Communitarianism is still a long way from being a full-fledged political ideology capable of competing on an equal footing with liberalism, which accounts for the fact that politics everywhere in the West still unfolds almost exclusively along the liberal paramenters of Left vs. Right. Yet, the substance of political discourse is almost entirely communitarian in character.

One needs only scan the main issues being debated by the candidates in the US Presidential election of November 2000 to realize how far they are from any easy classification as either "Left" or "Right" in terms of the traditional ideological meaning of the two sides: abortion, gun-control, gay rights, fiscal policies, education, health, etc. All of these issues presuppose particular cultural values that a strictly procedural liberalism has no business dealing with. Yet, late liberalism shows no reluctance in subsuming them within its jurisdiction. Having reified its world-view into a scientistic ideology predicated on arbitrary "human rights" imposed as universal values, and having successfully contained democratic prerogatives within equally arbitrary juridical parameters, liberalism assumes cultural values to be determined by politics rather than the other way around. No wonder a communitarian reaction has been brewing within various new social movements and beneath the conventional political radar, seeking in vain a viable political embodiment. Whether it will succeed remains a political contingency. Yet, as long as modernist liberalism continues encroaching on particular cultural spheres or in colonizing the *Lebenswelt*, it will only arouse otherwise dormant communitarian sentiments.

In a valiant effort to legitimate communitarianism as the new loyal

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opposition, Veneziani has managed both to inflate it to a theoretical dimension it cannot yet command, and to diminish its historical profile by compressing it into a pinch-hitter for a Right long since missing-in-action. Yet, he has managed to provide probably the best account of communitarianism to be found anywhere with such a few pages and with such a high level of sophistication.

Paul Piccone

Deliberative Democracy and its Discontents

Seyla Benhabib, ed., *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 373 pp.

Philosophy's "linguistic turn" was destined to find its way into derivative disciplines such as political theory. In the last two decades, this turn has led to an absurd reductionism extrapolating the essence of existing democracies from their mode of communication. Flattening political theory, followers of this fashion rarely relinquish their fixation with the communicative component of modern democracies to the level of a multifaceted analysis. The central notion here is "deliberative democracy." But is this a distinct model of democracy? For Seyla Benhabib, it means "elucidating the already implicit principles and logic of existing democratic practices" (p. 84) There are at least two problems with this approach.

First, Benhabib's macromodel of deliberative democracy — as an ideal type predicated on "deliberative rationality"[1] — is inconsistent with the lesser, more moderate claim that it elucidates only "some aspects of the logic of existing democratic practices better than others" (p. 68). Second, attempts to safeguard it against charges of "discursive reductionism" generate methodological problems, given the theory's claim of superiority over other alternatives. Political theories are constructive, not mimetic, and are produced through the web of power/knowledge, rather than benignly "mirroring" a given reality. In the "Introduction" to *Democracy and Difference*, Benhabib begins by defending Habermas'

1. Seyla Benhabib," Deliberative Rationality and Models of Constitutional Legitimacy," *Constellations 1* (1994), pp. 26, 31. In *Democracy and Difference*, however, Benhabib brackets any reference to "deliberative rationality."

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"procedural-deliberative democracy" as "providing the most adequate conceptual and institutional model for theorizing the democratic experience of complex societies" (p. 6). She hastens to add, however, that she does not "subscribe" to all aspects of Habermas' "arguments on behalf of this model." She then informs the reader that, in fact, she does not follow Habermas' "proceduralist-deliberative model" and goes on to defend a "fourth type": the "agonistic model of democratic politics." Later on, in "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy" (her own contribution to the anthology), having forgotten about "the agonistic model of democratic politics," she writes that she "privileges a deliberative model over other kinds of normative considerations" (p. 68). This, of course, is the familiar argument about the role of "rational deliberation among free and equal citizens," followed by the axiomatic assumption that "procedures of deliberation generate legitimacy as well as assure some degree of practical rationality" (p. 71).

Benhabib's fleeting dissatisfaction with the deliberative model of democracy, however, evinces a feeble attempt to compensate for the model's obliviousness to the power struggles within democratic societies. One of the main problems is the tendency toward procedural idealization. One only need look at Haider's recent victory in Austria, which has brought into question the legitimacy of electoral politics in that country. This is neither the first nor the last time when a relatively sophisticated Western electorate, enjoying "free and equal deliberation," has chosen what liberals regard as "the wrong horse," representing anti-liberal values. Nor is such a "democratic fiasco" explainable by means of a theory that *a priori* reconciles the value of deliberation with the outcome of voting and, furthermore, swims in the comfort zone of a "practical" or "deliberative" rationality with the premise that, as James Bohman put it, "the point of political deliberation is to solve social problems and to overcome political conflicts."[2] Much like Bohman and Nino, who writes about deliberation as "the trasformative solution,"[3] Benhabib assigns almost magic powers to deliberation as a cure all, albeit under the vacuous term "recursive validation." Thus, "What is distinctive about the discourse model is that although it presupposes that participants must recognize one another's entitlement to moral respect and reciprocity in some sense, the determination of the precise content and extent of these principles

2. James Bohman, *Public Deliberation* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T., 1996), p. 240.

3. Carlos Santiago Nino, *The Constitution of Deliberative Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996). This book is fraught with questionable notions, such as the "epistemic superiority of democracy," and rather banal claims that "bargaining on the basis of sheer interest often seriously threatens the democratic process" (p. 126). For an edited work on Nino's contribution that completely overlooks the egregious shortcomings of his quasi-Habermasian approach, see Harold Hongju and Ronald C. Slye, *Deliberative Democracy and Human Rights* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999). A number of other deliberative theorists have relinquished this epistemic claim. See, e.g., David Estlund, "Beyond Fairness and Deliberation: The Epistemic Dimenion of Democratic Authority," in James Bohman and William Rehg, eds., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1997), pp. 173-204.

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would be a consequence of discourses themselves" (p. 79).

In Joshua Cohen's case, his delineation of the formal properties of deliberative democracy hardly represents a step beyond mainstream "associational democracy."[4] Emphasizing the role of "autonomy" in deliberative democracies, Cohen makes the (rather foolhardy) claim that, as a result of "deliberative capabilities," the "relations of power and subordination are neutralized." What is absent here is the Habermasian caveat about the systematic distortions brought about by "the mediatizing power and money." Expunging the radical tinge of Habermasian theory may be in tune with its mass consumption in the conformist context of academia, but it hardly compensates for the attrition of explanatory power within the "deliberative democracy" model.

Of course, every model has its aberrations. Thus, there are "deliberative pathologies," e.g., the distortions of interest groups in legislative deliberations. In outlining the various forms of such pathologies, Stokes cites an example when "the intervention of special interests had the effect of misleading legislators about citizens preferences rather than actually changing those preferences."[5] Yet, Stokes falls short of drawing the necessary conclusion regarding deliberative theorists' choice of "free and equal citizens" as their starting point of departure and their illicit deduction from it of larger realities, e.g., interest groups. In today's democracies, wrought with "monied politics" and unequal lobbying power, it does not make sense to demote the structural distortions of "ideal deliberation" to the level of "secondary pathologies."

No wonder the economic dimension, not to mention the bureaucratic one, is either totally missing or minimally present in discourses on "deliberative democracy."[6] A partial exception is Bohman, who provides ample ammunition to question the fundamental assumptions of the "deliberative democracy" model, such as equality and fair procedure. Bohman shows that strong institutional measures, e.g., "a more extensive form of equality,"[7] are necessary in order to arrive at a functional deliberative democracy. Unfortunately, like other deliberative theorists, Bohman fails to understand that, in order to be applicable to existing democracies, deliberative democracy theory must be recast. A good beginning may be to jettison the concept of deliberative democracy altogether.

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi

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4. Cohen, ""Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," *ibid*, p. 78. In reality, however, policy-making processes are marked by continuous power struggles among conflicting forces. See Robert Sennet, *The Conscience of the Eye: The Design of Social Life of Cities* (London: Faber, 1991).

5. Susan C. Stokes, "Pathologies of Deliberation," in John Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 129.

6. See Jon Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," in Bohman and Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-35.

7. Bohman and Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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